

# THEATRE and STAGE

Volume I

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SIR BARRY JACKSON

(2477)

Fr.



# THEATRE AND STAGE

A MODERN GUIDE TO THE PERFORMANCE OF ALL CLASSES OF  
AMATEUR DRAMATIC, OPERATIC, AND THEATRICAL WORK

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*Edited by* HAROLD DOWNS

*ASSISTED BY WELL-KNOWN AUTHORITIES AND CELEBRITIES  
IN THE THEATRICAL WORLD*

FULLY ILLUSTRATED WITH MANY PHOTOGRAPHS,  
PLATES, AND DIAGRAMS



VOLUME I

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# FOREWORD

By SIR BARRY JACKSON

**M**OST people are born into the world with a definite urge to express themselves in some particular direction, such as that of art, science, literature, sport, politics—and so on. We need not fall back upon the comfortable doctrine of predestination in considering how far each person succeeds ultimately in following his or her own special bent; the Parable of the Talents is more fitting to the case. For environment, both physical and mental, comes quickly into play, and it is usually by sheer determination rather than by unguided chance that natural aims and abilities survive the thwarting of unfriendly circumstance.

Certain powers are latent in all of us—at first—to a remarkable degree, though for lack of cultivation they quickly atrophy. Children, for example, often show an astonishing aptitude for drawing; and if the draughtsmanship of these young artists were in any way comparable with their imagination, surprising results would frequently ensue. But from want of encouragement and training such early efforts in most cases run to waste, so that both vision and technique soon die together. I well remember the description once given me, by a country vicar, of the drawings made by a lad in his village school; yet that boy afterwards became a farm labourer, and in all probability never touched pencil and paper again. He was, unfortunately, no Giotto, with a Cimabue to find him sketching in the fields and bear him off to Florence.

Perhaps the strongest and most nearly universal of all early human tendencies is that which leads the mind to express itself in terms of drama. Classically defined as "Representative Action," drama reveals itself as a mainspring in all the original, unorganized games devised by children—games of make-believe and "Let's Pretend." Those who in later years choose the Drama as their walk in life begin—if the weaker among them do not always end—by feeling a passion for their work equal to that of all great artists. The quality of final greatness lies in the survival of this feeling, still pure and undiluted, in face of material conditions.

I recall, in this connexion, the owner of a London theatre who appeared to have no real interest in the Drama, and whom, therefore, I once asked why he was concerned in stage affairs. He replied that as a youth he had been wildly enthusiastic—even to the extent of saving money carefully, when a poor man, to join a dramatic society for the sake of a chance to act. Obstacles and other claims, however, had gradually killed this love, until now he found that possession of bricks and mortar gave him sole satisfaction. In other words, his urge to create had been entirely supplanted by desire to control—an example, I suppose, of what psychologists call sublimation, and an instance of what is always happening to the artists in the world.

But fortunately the Drama has innumerable devotees, and the army of its faithful servants is great indeed. Hence comes the enormous growth of the Amateur



Dramatic Movement, which does far more than merely keep pace with the decline of the professional stage. The causes of that decline need no repetition, nor can one serve any good purpose by enlarging on them. But what is so amazing is the way in which the amateur has leapt into the breach, and by so doing not only saved the Drama in this country from virtual extinction, but breathed literally new life into it. In prosperous days, the world was too much with the Theatre; getting and spending, it laid waste its powers, and if true to a certain public, it was often not true to itself. Compelled to it by his necessities, but none the less both learning and teaching a great lesson in the process, the amateur proclaims the old truth that the play's the thing, to which scenery, costumes, properties, and the company itself, are but accessories.

Apart from its value to the community as a whole, the Amateur Dramatic Movement, by the outlet that it offers to creative work, can enrich the lives of countless individuals. It stands for independence and for progress simultaneously, and in it the will to survive is matched by the courage to experiment. Its strength is great because, as was said above, the dramatic is of all secondary instincts the most nearly universal, as it is also, perhaps, the most educative when adequately used. Recognizing this, the leading amateur societies have not contented themselves with easy imitation, but have sought out and worked hard to develop all kinds of new plays and fresh ideas. Young authors especially are indebted to them; never before, certainly, has the budding playwright had such allies or such opportunities. Discoveries will be many as the work of the amateur societies continues to extend still further throughout the country.

Side by side with the encouragement of new writers must be placed the resuscitation of old ones—a branch formerly all too neglected. The simplicity of our early English plays not only renders them peculiarly adapted to performance on small stages with few adventitious aids—it is something actually refreshing in itself, and possessing an unexpected delight and appeal for audiences somewhat sated by modern sophistication. Indeed, I rank the revival of old authors as equal in value to the support of new ones—for a living Drama can only draw sustenance from its roots. That the old authors demand no fee is, of course, a further advantage to societies of limited resources.

Altogether, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that some potent force is at work in all this dramatic activity—the Spirit of the Theatre, perhaps, refusing to accept defeat. Cheerfully the amateur has shouldered a heavy burden, but the labour being one of love, its weight is scarcely felt in all the excitement of advance and exploration. The Amateur Dramatic Movement is, in fact, typical of England, which has always achieved more through the efforts of her private citizens, working independently towards a common end, than through governmental action. Consequently, there is no doubt whatever that the Drama will not only live, but will increase in stature through the coming years, and—observing what they have already done—I look to the amateur societies to win for it nothing less than a complete renaissance.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, likely belonging to J. M. Barrie, written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

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# Theatre and Stage

A Modern Guide to the Performance  
of all Classes of Amateur Dramatic,  
Operatic, and Theatrical  
Work

## THE PAST AND FUTURE OF THE AMATEUR MOVEMENT

By GEOFFREY WHITWORTH

*Founder and Secretary of the British Drama League. Author of "Father Noah"*

THE title "The Past and Future of the Amateur Movement," preliminary as it is to studies on the arts of Theatre and Stage, may seem, and may well be, too ambitious. To write adequately of the past of the Amateur Movement, in the sense in which the term is here used, would be to write the early history of the stage as a whole. For nothing is further from the mark than to regard the amateur actor as an appendage to the stage, who only came into existence with Charles Dickens and the "amateur theatricals" of the mid-Victorian era. Normally, of course, when we speak of the Theatre we are thinking of a highly organized activity whose function it is to present Drama to the public with all the luxury and efficiency of a big commercial undertaking. Nor is it surprising that an art with so wide a popular appeal as that of the Stage should have become associated (as much to its benefit as to its hurt) with commerce, and therefore with professionalism. But at the beginning of things we may be sure that the gulf between amateur and professional did not exist. Just as the modern playwright is either good or bad, so we may assume was the primeval actor; and that was an end of the matter.

The art of acting, like that of pictorial design, is

co-eval with civilization, and it is only an accident—the permanency of the rock—that allows us to trace the beginnings of draughtsmanship in the cave dwellings of Palaeolithic times, whereas no physical relic of the prehistoric actor survives. Nevertheless, where Stonehenge or some similar monument persists to remind us of the practice of religious ritual before even the dawn of history, there we may fairly deduce the existence of the actor, since all religious ritual is a kind of "play," even as in the life of children, we find the rudiments of the actor's art spontaneous in the "dressing-up" games of the nursery.



MR. GEOFFREY WHITWORTH

A feeling for the drama, then, and some ability to express it in action, are innate human characteristics. Man, in fact, might be defined as a "dramatic animal" with quite as much reason as Aristotle had for defining him as a "political animal." There are probably more Englishmen alive to-day who could put up a passable show on the stage of a theatre than could hold their own in a debate in the House of Commons. And are there not uncivilized races, like the Bantus in Southern Africa, whom travellers have described as all "born actors"? Let us see, very briefly, how this widespread instinct became canalized, so to speak, within the limits of conscious art; and then refined to such a pitch

of specialization as to make inevitable the modern distinction between professional and amateur.

By the fifth century B.C. the Greek Theatre had attained a position that we can recognize as the source from which derives the European theatre as we know it to-day. Already Thespis had demonstrated the superiority of his carefully trained "chorus" in the dramatic celebrations which accompanied the festivals of Dionysus, that famous ritual whence was to evolve the whole classic drama of ancient Greece. This "chorus" was composed almost certainly of amateur performers, but in the later civic festivals of Athens, professionals, employed by the State, assumed the chief individual parts. A group or "caste" of these professional players was allotted to each dramatist entering for the prize given to the best play. Apart from this competitive element, the general organization of the festivals must have been comparable to that of such an amateur but municipal effort as that of the Passion Play at Oberammergau. The idea of the drama as a private enterprise came later, and then only in respect of the comedies of the Greek decadence.

The secular drama of Rome was in the hands, doubtless, of professional companies. It was the remnant of these companies—comedians for the most part—which, scattered northwards after the fall of the Roman Empire, kept alive, through the so-called Dark Ages, the tradition of stage professionalism. But theirs was, for the most part, an art of strolling jugglery and minstrelsy. The serious drama was dead—awaiting its rebirth at the hands of the amateurs, and once again through the inspiration of religion. Throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it was the Catholic Church in England, France, and Germany that renewed the art of drama by the impulse it gave to the creation of those Miracle and Mystery Plays of which the outstanding examples in our own country are the Guild Cycles of Coventry, Norwich, and York. These Plays were written to popularize the cardinal facts of Old and New Testament history. Conceived in the spirit of religious instruction, they presently took on elements of what would now be known as "entertainment value." From the church they migrated to the market place, to be acted at times of public holiday in much the same way as the local "pageant," which has be-

come so marked a feature of the amateur theatre of modern times.

The story of the transition from the theatre of the Guilds to the theatre of the Elizabethans is of deep interest. It has been told in a fascinating volume by Dr. F. S. Boas, *An Introduction to Tudor Drama*—a book that can be cordially recommended to anyone who is concerned to trace the connexion between the amateur and the professional theatres of the Renaissance. From the researches that have been made generally available in this book, it is clear that the dramatists immediately antecedent to Shakespeare would have found no outlet for their talents had it not been for the help of amateur actors encouraged in their art by Courts, Universities, and Schools. Henry Medwell, the pioneer Tudor playwright, wrote his *Fulgens and Lucre* for production at Morton's Palace at Lambeth in the year 1497; John Heywood *The Play of the Wether* for some similar domestic entertainment a few years later; while *Ralph Roister Doister* was written by the schoolmaster Nicholas Udall probably while he was serving in that capacity under Gardiner, the Bishop of Winchester. The plays of many of the more illustrious Elizabethan dramatists were first performed on the amateur or semi-amateur stage. In fact, it would be no exaggeration to assert that Shakespearean Drama as we know it—not excluding the work of the master himself—would never have come into existence had it not been for the facilities for dramatic experiment that had been provided by the amateur stage of the period.

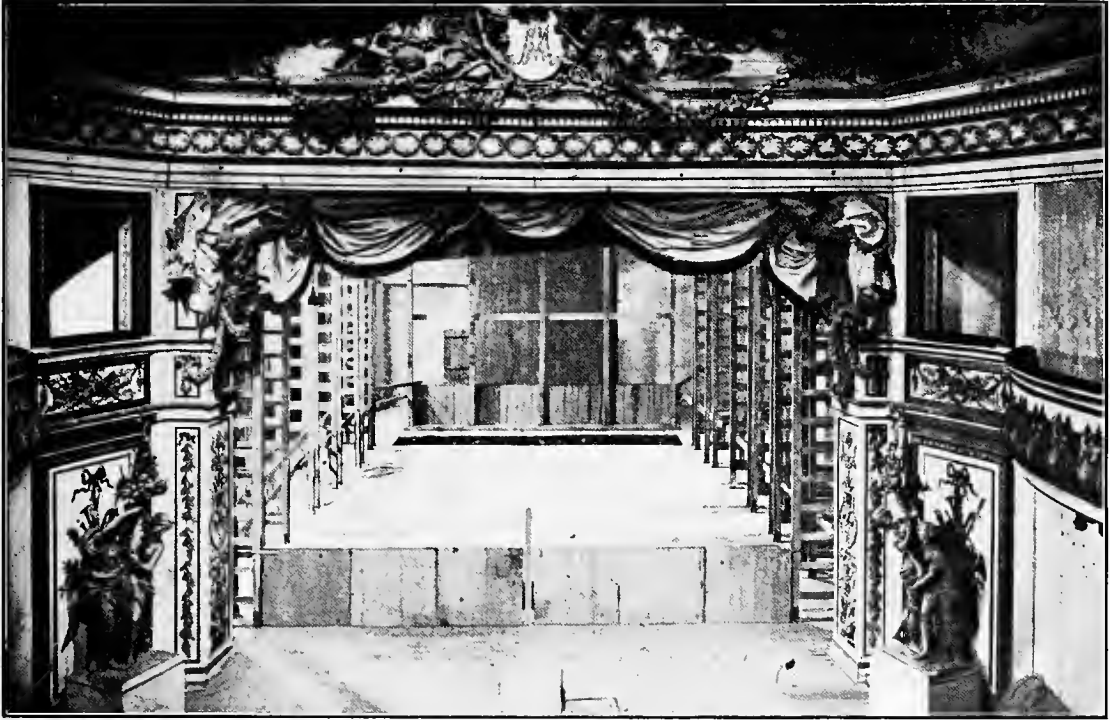
By the time of Shakespeare several professional companies were, of course, in action, both in London and in the Provinces. The play scene in *Hamlet* shows the princely attitude of the time towards one of these companies of touring players. And the amateur movement of the day—in one of its less exalted manifestations—comes in for some pointed yet not unsympathetic satire in the clown scenes of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Bottom and his troupe of "rude mechanicals" suggest that amateur acting was not even then confined to the social strata exemplified by royal courts and seats of learning, but that it had spread, as in our own day, to the ranks of the "workers."

Skipping forwards, we find John Milton

writing *Comus* for performance at a courtly Masque at Ludlow in the year 1634. But the Puritan movement killed amateur acting as a popular pastime, and, unlike the drama of the professional stage, it made no recovery for a hundred years or more. It was not till later still that the amateur stage regained any influence

powder" (by trade he was in fact a printer) paid 2s. and were admitted to the best seats, while 6d. for a corn plaster admitted to the gallery.

Meanwhile, on the continent of Europe, developments were occurring that are comparable with those in England, if in many ways dissimilar



GLIMPSE OF PART OF THE AUDITORIUM OF MARIE ANTOINETTE'S THEATRE, SHOWING HER INITIALS ABOVE THE CURTAIN AND RESTORATION OF THE STAGE

upon the progress of the English theatre as a whole.

Throughout the eighteenth century, however, there are records of sporadic amateur activity in various parts of the country. In Exeter, for instance, we know of a Mr. Andrew Bryce who, with the help of a company of players from Bath, built a theatre behind the Guildhall. In 1737 theatrical performances in Exeter were illegal, but in the intervals of publicly advertised "Concerts of Music" the Bath Players would perform a play "merely for their own Improvement and Diversion and without Gain, Hire or Reward." Persons applying to Mr. Bryce for "tooth

in their outcome. In France, for instance, royal patronage of Court drama culminated under Louis XIV in the foundation of the *Comédie française*. This classic institution was the parent and pattern of all those National and Civic Theatres that have become the rule abroad, to the infinite advantage of the European theatre. Dramatic production on the grand scale did not, however, destroy the natural desire felt by every social rank for personal participation in the art of the stage. But amateur acting was frowned on as a pastime for royalty, and Marie Antoinette, who built and equipped a charming Little Theatre at her Palace of Les Trianons, came in for sharp

criticism on account of the play-acting tendencies that she indulged there, albeit in private. All through the eighteenth century the Italian drama owed scarcely less to the impromptu enterprise of the amateurs. It is to Germany, however, that we must look for the next link of capital importance between the amateur and the professional stage. In the year 1775 the Duke of Weimar appointed Goethe as Director of his amateur Court Theatre. Goethe filled this post for forty-two years, and thus—though oftentimes in revolt against the petty tasks entailed by his

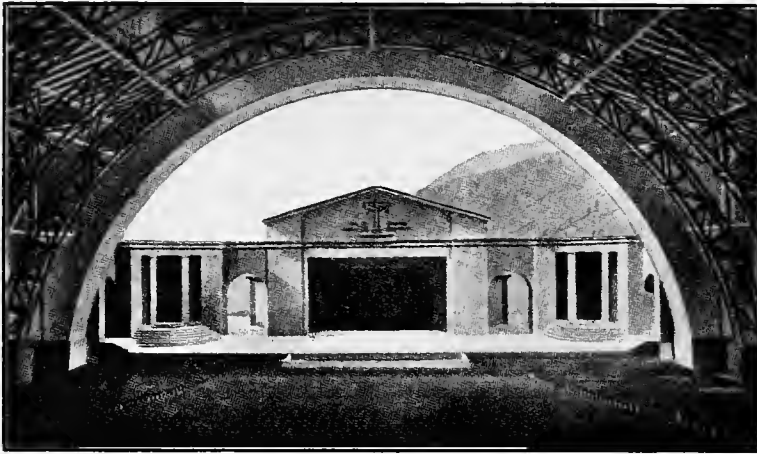
was significantly knighted in 1893. At Oxford and Cambridge the O.U.D.S. and the A.D.C. were restoring a *rapprochement* between the stage and university life that had seemed gone beyond recall. This, too, was the hey-day of "amateur theatricals," a movement untouched by intellectual impulse, but still affording evidence of the wide spread of histrionic talent among all classes, and of great service to the charitable funds in whose aid the performances were held. But in America, by the first decade of the twentieth century, the Little Theatre Movement was well on its way, and in

Russia, at a country house outside Moscow, Stanislavsky was laying the foundations of an Art Theatre that was to vindicate once more the ability of the amateur to inspire and rejuvenate the art of the professional stage.

In the few years immediately preceding the War, there came signs of a new development of amateur drama in England. The success of Miss Horniman's professional "Gaiety Theatre" Company in Manchester must have done much to encourage an interest in intelligent drama in the North of England, and

about this time we come upon the foundation of such amateur clubs as the Stockport Garrick Society. To pre-War days must also be ascribed the birth of Sir Barry Jackson's Birmingham Repertory Theatre which began as a small amateur society. A new kind of Village Drama also came into existence about this time as typified by "The Aldbourne Players."

These, and a few other comparable activities, showed which way the wind was blowing, and doubtless amateur dramatic work would have grown in volume and efficiency in the ordinary course of progress. But I think it unlikely that, but for the War, we should have been faced with anything like the flood of amateur effort and accomplishment that has been so notable a phenomenon from the year 1920.



STAGE AT OBERAMMERGAU

office—the great poet-dramatist had the great advantage during a major portion of his life of the varied experience and practice that only work on the amateur stage, it may be, can afford.

We cannot here argue questions of cause and effect, but it must be noted that the admitted decline in intellectual vigour that the drama suffered during the first half of the nineteenth century, coincided with a corresponding failure of amateur effort. Fine actors there were, but few fine plays, till Ibsen, the Norwegian, inaugurated a new era of dramatic creativeness. England felt this influence later than some other countries. But by the first Jubilee of Queen Victoria the revival was beginning. Henry Irving, though wedded to plays of the old school,

*Geoffrey Whitworth.*



# THE CRITICAL FACULTY

## SOUND APPRAISEMENT AND THE VITALITY OF THE AMATEUR MOVEMENT

By IVOR BROWN

*Author of "Parties of the Play," "Brown Studios," etc.*

EVERY actor is a critic—of the other fellow or the rival team; and sometimes he is a very good critic, for he speaks of what he knows and of what he has learned by suffering, and spins no theories out of book-lore. But his point of view is often rather limited; he is so interested in the technique of expression that he

overlooks the thing expressed or intended to be expressed. In my contacts with professional actors I have found them acute critics of detail in performance, but indifferent judges of the play as a whole. (Naturally such a sweeping statement must allow for exceptions. I know of

he has to put up with continuous criticism from his producer and, in some cases, this is frank and even harsh. One or two of our leading professional producers indulge in methods of criticism that no amateur company would tolerate.

Amateur actors get little newspaper criticism of value. In London there are so many groups competing for attention that newspapers have, for the most part, given up the job of noticing their efforts. There is neither space nor staff to cope with them after the considerable demands of the professional stage have been met. The societies most likely to get good newspaper criticism are those in a town large enough to own a good local Press. Here there will probably be a competent theatrical journalist who will have time and space at his disposal. Amateurs in small towns or villages that have only a weekly paper receive the usually flattering attentions of a reporter who cannot be expected to have special knowledge or strict standards of assessment. It is much better fun for him to go to a play than to attend a public meeting and record its round of speeches and so everything in the dramatic garden is apt to be lovely in his eyes. This kind of journalistic attention is doubtless pleasant to the amateur exhibitionist; it assists publicity and may help the box-office at the next performance; but it is of no use to the amateur as theatrical worker.

At the same time the amateur societies which perform in the National Festival of Community Drama receive expert and detailed criticism from the judges after their performances in the initial and intermediate stages of the Festival. This is criticism of the very best kind, practical observations by practical workers in the theatre. It would be asking too much of human nature to expect the critic always to be right and the actor always to agree; but the competitors always get something to think and argue over, and it is one great merit of the Festival that it provides these



MR. IVOR BROWN

no better all-round critic, for example, than Mr. Cedric Hardwicke.)

This criticism of the actor-as-critic is less true of the amateur than of the professional stage, or at any rate it is less true of the more ambitious corner of the amateur stage, where I believe there is real feeling for drama in its totality and not merely a jealous computation of personal opportunities offered and missed. Moreover, the best kind of amateur puts up with a reasonable censure far better than the professional, who simply reads criticisms with a hungry eye for epithets; if he does not find "admirable" or "brilliant" he is apt to dismiss the notice with contempt. On the other hand, during rehearsal

opportunities for public assessment and subsequent privy discussion.

But Festival performances are only a tiny fraction of the myriad amateur productions that are given throughout the year. For these other and far more numerous occasions the British Drama League will provide, to affiliated societies and at a small fee, a competent critic who will give a considered verdict at the end of the evening. This facility is considerably used in the London area; naturally there is less employment of visiting critics in the country, where the travelling expenses will be larger and the amount of time involved may make it harder to procure the right man or woman.

Without doubt this supply of qualified criticism is one of the most useful of the many services supplied by the League and it is desirable that every ambitious society should make use of it. The expenditure on criticism should not be regarded as a luxurious extra; it should be regarded as essential to the health of the society. I suggest that, where the local newspaper criticism is no more than a form of amiable reporting, the amateur groups should ask the editors to print instead the opinions (or a summary of the opinions) expressed by the qualified visiting critic. The editor might even be coaxed into paying for this copy, as he would have to pay his own reporter for the job, and in that case the expenses of the visiting critic would be met or diminished. The visiting critic presumably has "a name" in his own line of business and speaks with authority; hence his copy would be better for the local paper than an unsigned description by a reporter who may be an excellent all-round journalist but cannot be blamed for a certain innocence about the theatre.

There is scope also for mutual exchange of criticism between amateur societies that are of similar ambition and achievement. Complimentary seats might be sent to the leading members of a neighbouring group with an invitation to express their opinions later upon the merits of the

production; preferably this would be done in a written report. The judged would subsequently visit the other society in the capacity of judges and report in due course. Such a situation would need tactful handling; but, where both societies are animated by the real spirit of community drama, I see no reason why the system should not be of practical value. It may be that some members of the Movement, who are not naturally actors but have a deep attachment to the theatre, a clear comprehension of dramatic values, and a ready means of self-expression, will wish to devote themselves more and more to critical activities of this kind.

The number of people who can get up immediately after a performance and deliver, by word of mouth, a well-arranged, proportioned, and articulate criticism must be small. There are good speakers who are not good critics and good critics who are not good speakers; a bad speech will destroy the value of a good criticism. It would be optimistic to expect a constant supply of people enjoying the double qualification. But there is no essential need for immediate judgment. The amateur society, which has invited a visit from one of the amateur critics whom I have just described, should be ready to distribute typed copies of his verdict a day or two after the event, if, as is likely, he is unwilling to get up and speak *ex tempore*. Besides, if he has to be stern, it is more agreeable to be so on paper, when he can consider his words carefully. There is less chance then of the rash phrase which he himself would subsequently regret.

In any case criticism, through the Press, the visiting deputies of the British Drama League, or through local initiative, is essential to the vitality of the Amateur Movement. It will show a poor spirit in the Movement if it does not ask for frank and frequent comment or resents it when given. But I have far larger opinions of the Movement than to expect pettiness of outlook, and I await the time when the supply of expert criticism will be organized on a really wide scale.

Ivor Brown.

# Theory and Practice of STAGECRAFT

*Introduction by*  
**TERENCE GRAY**  
*The Festival Theatre, Cambridge*

**I**N dealing with Stagecraft it is necessary to be clear as to what type of Stage is being employed as basis for the Craft.

It must be assumed that the Georgian and neo-Georgian stage is not in question. We are at the end of a theatrical era and the subject is modern stagecraft; modern stagecraft can no more be practised on a Georgian or neo-Georgian stage than motor-racing on a velodrome. Unfortunately, however, there is as yet no modern stage on which to practise modern stagecraft. The craft has burst its bounds, the art has outstripped its medium, stagecraft is at sea in an open boat.



MR. TERENCE GRAY

The architect is not to blame; architecture is ever the forerunner, the most progressive of the arts. The fault lies with Democracy which has placed its life, its liberties, and its arts in the hands of a supine political system which creates bureaucrats qualified for selling sausages to one another but not for organizing a complicated system of civilization. Architects such as Norman Bel-Geddes, and not he alone, have long ago brought to theoretical perfection the theatre of to-day, but not a single one in the whole wide world has yet been allowed to come into actual existence. The economic stranglehold of the Theatre-as-a-trade, combined with the laws of censorship and the local by-laws which control every detail

of theatrical buildings and are framed only to fit the neo-Georgian theatre, have effectively blockaded every effort to bring into existence the theatre of to-day. Of course the artists will win in the end.

It is painful to have to pretend to be a prophet when one is writing of something that potentially has been established for at least a decade, for all the world over (except perhaps in London), in Prague and in Paris, in Berlin and in Moscow, in Vienna and in Cambridge—to choose a few theatrical capitals almost haphazard—modern stagecraft has been struggling to birth.

Since an objective example of the modern theatre does not exist it becomes necessary to indicate its general differences from the theatre we all know. Briefly then, the modern theatre is not, like the present theatre, relatively two-dimensional, it has not a peep-show stage, it does not strive, unsuccessfully, to present actors and scenic material as nearly as possible from one angle of vision only. That burden, like so many others, has been lifted from the shoulders of the Theatre by the Cinema. The spectator's eye is not the single eye of the camera: it is an argus-eye that in its widest range can see from every part of a semi-circle at one and the same time. In brief, every actor is seen in the round and must therefore learn to act in the round.

This is not a complexity, but a simplification; automatically it abolishes a host of parasitic accretions that have been strangling the Theatre for generations. Gone is the theatre that is a box-of-tricks, the child's plaything on the scale of life, the wizard's cave of supposititious illusion. What in the name of Dionysus has Illusion got to do with Art anyhow? All the hotch-potch of proscenium and flies, grids and strips and wings and tormentors and all the rest of the mumbo-jumbo—clean gone, surviving only in its rightful place—a child's playbox.

As far as essential things are concerned we have gone back to Aeschylus and to Shakespeare, to Aristophanes and to Molière; and what better company could we be in? Their peers the Theatre has never seen, and it never will see their peers until their theatre is restored to them in its essentials, which are the simple essentials that make the framework for really great art. The stage is once more just an orchestra (dancing-place) and an acting-area on which the human body can be employed as a medium of expression to its fullest extent and in its widest aspect, and from which the human voice can be used, also as a medium of expression, singly and in combination, to the limit of its range. But there are modern mechanical inventions which can be brought to the service of such a theatre. For instance the scenic element has become not merely pictorial but architectural and dynamic, and such a stage will be capable of mechanical adjustment as regards form and levels according to the needs of the director. The lighting also has become simplified and is merely a question of an adequate supply of sources of light, concealed behind *louvre*s and directed on to the stage from every point of the compass that does not strike the auditorium, in short, continuous semi-circles of light-sources at different levels and at varying distances from the stage.

On this stage what has been called Naturalism—the imitation of life for its own sake, i.e. without interpretation, or revaluation at the hands of art, is difficult if not impossible to practise; but then it is hardly conceivable that anybody should wish to practise it, for this is the stage of a Theatre that has been reborn as an Art, the Cinema having relieved it of the degrading business of seeking to transfer life *en bloc* from the streets and drawing-rooms to places of entertainment, a business which the Cinema is fitted by its nature to perform efficiently, but which the Theatre has never succeeded in doing well and in doing at all has lost its status, its birthright, and the respect of the cultured element in the community.

Whatever Stagecraft may have been in the immediate past, and it seems to have been largely a question of devising methods of achieving an unattainable illusion, it has become reorientated and simplified. Like every aspect of the Theatre it has suffered a rebirth and has changed not only

its methods but even its function in the course of the general Revaluation of Theatrical Values. Illusionism being no longer either an end in itself nor even a means to an end, Stagecraft has returned to its original function and has become once more just the Technique of the Artist of the Theatre, of the directing intelligence which fashions a play out of a number of contributory elements, an author's conception and verbal material, actors' bodies and voices, artists' creations in plane and mass; it is the technique whereby these elements are fused and set forth in a single homogeneous work of art called a performance.

For, in the modern Theatre the play is no longer the thing, and from the point of view of the modern theatre-artist it is almost inconceivable that it ever could have been. The theatre is being rescued from the degradation of being a place for the exhibition of the work of men of letters, a printer's rival, wherein the literary inventions of men who, for the most part, know no more of the theatre than of the scientist's laboratory, are spoken by impersonators and accompanied by appropriate actions. Aeschylus was a dancer, Shakespeare and Molière were comedians; none of them was a man of letters, each devised material for a troupe of actors at the instigation and under the direction of a man who created therefrom a work of theatre-art in performance. So it must be again. The "play", the literary man's sacred text, hot from a typewriter, is of the theatrical past, the printed drama is to become a literary curiosity; as with the *commedia dell'arte* the idea will come from within the theatre, and the verbal framework will be created, by a poet perhaps, but by a poet who is also a worker inside the theatre, and even then his text will be no more sacred than Shakespeare's was to Burbage, than is, or should be, an actor's mannerisms to a producer, but will be moulded according to the needs of the director's theatrical conception as a whole. In short, the ultimate performance alone will constitute "the play" and not the author's text nor any other component part.

Stagecraft then becomes the Technique whereby these diverse elements, the author's verbal material, the artist's plastic material, the actor's emotional material, are translated into visual and aural performance.

*Terence Gray.*

# STAGECRAFT AND THE AMATEUR

By HAL D. STEWART

Author of "Rizzio's Boots," "The Blind Eye," etc.

THE amateur theatre to-day commands an attention that is probably unique in the theatrical history of this island. Press and public are awakening to the fact that the new movement in amateur drama differs from previous waves of enthusiasm in this direction, and are beginning to realize that serious artistic

efforts are being made.

The amateur audience is now composed not only of the friends and relations of the actors, but of many who have no personal interest in the cast but are genuinely interested in this new development and in the type of play that is being performed by the better non-professional societies.



MR. HAL D. STEWART

Photo by Weir, Glasgow

Therein lies the hope and the danger of the enterprise. The hope, because it foreshadows the day when a regular audience for the more serious theatre will exist in every town and village. The danger, because this audience will, before long, demand more finished productions than ninety per cent of those it attends at present. The ultimate outcome rests with the play producing societies themselves. It is within their power to bring about a complete change in the attitude of the British people to the theatre, but it will mean a great deal of study and solid hard work in order to make what is at present the average standard of the better groups, the average of the amateur theatre as a whole. Unless this is done it is doubtful whether the interest that has been awakened will be maintained.

Generally speaking, amateur productions suffer less by reason of bad acting than by weak pro-

duction and an almost complete lack of consideration for stagecraft. Perhaps this is not altogether surprising. Amateur dramatic groups are generally formed by people who wish to act, and are often ignorant or impatient of what they regard as a subsidiary part of the business. This is a most mistaken point of view.

Stagecraft in its widest sense embraces all the business of putting a play on the stage. It includes the arts of the designer, the carpenter, and the electrician, amongst a host of others. All these arts, which may contribute materially to the success of a production, are too often neglected or despised. Times without number good acting is marred by a wholly inappropriate setting and by failure to attend to the most elementary details.

The set is badly erected. Flats do not join. The set is not masked in. There is an unfortunate hiatus in the ceiling, through which one can see the roof of the building between the borders. Those sitting at one side of the theatre can see the back wall, or another scene, because the window backing does not stretch far enough. If you have never noticed these faults in any amateur production you are fortunate—or unobservant.

The illustration is a striking example of the effectiveness of modern stagecraft methods. It is a photograph of the Gate Theatre's production of *Let Sleeping Gods Lie*, by Wilfred Walter.

The play was produced on a stage considerably smaller than many on which amateurs are accustomed to work.

Apart from the actual setting, the whole management of the stage is an art: or rather, it comprises many arts. Even the efficient handling of scenery is an art, and has a direct bearing on the audience. Long intervals, which are usually occasioned by inefficient stage hands and lack of organization, try the temper, and the audience must be maintained in a good temper at all costs.

Badly timed effects may wreck a scene. An actor turns an electric switch, and nothing happens. Then, when he walks away, a lamp

lights suddenly, as if by magic. Thunder and wind are so unlike the real things that they cause a laugh. A prompter does not know the play and gives a prompt during a legitimate pause. All these things are fairly common accidents, the responsibility for which rests with the stage manager.

I have heard it argued that these mistakes are



"LET SLEEPING GODS LIE"

(Gate Theatre Production)

not confined to amateurs, but that they occur also in the commercial theatre. To a certain extent this is true, but in the commercial theatre they occur rarely, and are usually a matter of considerable comment. In the amateur theatre they are too often a commonplace.

I believe that stagecraft is one department of the theatre where the amateur may compete with the professional on advantageous terms; for, while he may not have all the mechanical devices

that exist in the commercial playhouse, he can give more or less unlimited time to a single production, and can therefore study each department in great detail.

Time spent in this way will not be wasted. All the various people who spend their time helping the production "behind the scenes," can, by making themselves efficient at their particular job, not only make a direct contribution towards the success of the play, but derive much satisfaction and entertainment for themselves in the process.

Stage management, taken seriously, is not dull work. It is extraordinarily fascinating: and as the whole science of stagecraft is constantly changing, as new discoveries are made and new ideas are introduced, the keen amateur will find considerable interest in endeavouring to keep pace with the various developments.

There is another aspect of a proper attention to stagecraft on the part of a play producing group. It is capable of adding considerably to the number of those taking a practical interest in its affairs. The duties of the stage manager and his assistants are often performed by unfortunates who have not been cast, and who would much prefer to act. If this be the case, it is not surprising that the work is done in rather a half-hearted manner. But if you are able to demonstrate the interest that lies in stagecraft, you may attract to your group people who have no desire to act, but who are, or who may become, interested in one or other of the branches of theatrical work where no histrionic ability is required.

By spreading the work in this manner you may achieve perfection in each department, and thus reach perfection as a whole. You will find also that by increasing the number of those directly interested in the performance, you will almost certainly increase the size of the audience — a point worth considering in itself.

There are exceptions to every rule. I know that there are groups throughout the country to which my remarks do not apply. These are already taking stagecraft seriously, and are reaching a high standard of artistic achievement.

# ASPECTS OF PRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION BY  
*Sir Nigel Playfair*

IT is one thing to possess, as I suppose I must, a certain instinct for controlling the odd people who make up a theatrical entertainment, and quite another to have a gift for marshalling and controlling theories and explanations, in fact to be able to tell anyone how "the thing is done."

However, that is what many people want to know; people who take an interest in the theatre and believe that properly organized and handled it may prove to be an instrument for good, to help us to a better understanding of our difficult world, to be even, as it were, a fly on the wheel of progress, now that it sometimes seems to us to be revolving pretty rapidly in the wrong direction.

And for the other sort of people, the people who judge by effect only and have no sympathy whatever with the sort of difficulties that have to be surmounted before an effect is achieved, I imagine that I need not trouble with them—they are unlikely to be found among the readers of *THEATRE AND STAGE*.

I take it that they want to read some sort of apology from me for the profession in which I earn my livelihood, and, having so read, to decide for themselves whether in their own dramatic clubs it is worth while conferring the title of "Producer" upon one of their number, and if they do, to lay down some sort of rule as to the amount of respect they intend to pay him or her, and what he or she ought to do to deserve that respect.

Now I can imagine a motion that might be brought forward at a debating society and eloquently introduced in such terms as these: "That the powers of the Producer have increased, are increasing, and ought to be extinguished."

I can imagine, in my mind's ear, a young gentleman smarting from the suggestion made to him when last he graced the local stage, that

it would be better if he learned by heart the actual words that the author had written, and when he had learned them, allowed the audience in the back rows to hear them, growing extremely indignant over the whole matter.

He would tell you that the whole office of the Producer was a recent innovation, absent or unmissed in the palmy days of the English theatre, that it was created, or at any rate first made much of, in Germany, and is redolent of the fussy, bureaucratic natives of that complicated country. "Craig, I know," he might say, "Molière I have heard of, but who is this Mr. Jones, that he should lord it over me?"

Is he an artist—look at him! Can he write plays—has he ever acted . . . is not his scenery designed by somebody else? The theatre is no place for the drill sergeant—an unsympathetic creature who merely hinders the natural graces of individuality and movement that I am kind enough to wish to give expression to for the benefit of my fellow-townsmen."

Well, we may sympathize with his indignation, but he is wrong. In an imperfect state of society the stage can no more do without the services of the Producer than the town can do without the policeman.

He is there to study the imperfections of the



SIR NIGEL PLAYFAIR

player, and to remedy them as well as he can. He is as a trainer to a boxer in fact, and he has his duties to the author and the decorator as well as to the player.

Nature, up to now, puts strict limits on the expression of genius; the supply is invariably below the demand, and we have got to do the best we can.

This, then, is where the Producer comes in—a botcher-up of imperfections, with no claims perhaps to being anything of an artist, but if he is worth anything at all, a skilled mechanic.

How is it, then, that he has grown into a position of greater importance in the past few years, that he has begun to be heard of, to have his photograph in the papers and his name in a prominent position on the bills?

Some will remember Pinero's definition of an ideal Club Secretary. He was "a functionary who saw to it that the members of his club had every opportunity to grumble and no cause." It would not, I think, be a bad definition for a Stage Producer.

You see I make no claim for more than a respectable position for the profession to which I have the honour to belong. I claim merely that a Producer is a useful and ever-necessary functionary; that he has to co-ordinate various arts, the art of acting, the art of the author, of the musician, of the scene painter and costume designer, and therefore that he must have some working knowledge, even if it be superficial, of all of them. Perhaps I go too far even in using the word "knowledge" and should substitute the phrase "intelligent appreciation."

He must be a sound critic of acting, if not himself an actor, though he must, I think, be enough of an actor to be able to show what he requires done by example as well as by precept. He must have a working knowledge of the art of the dramatist, though not necessarily able himself to write a good play. He must know what is meant by design, colour, grouping, rhythm, and the effect of lighting and of music.

He must act generally in the capacity of adviser to the management, in the question of the general policy of a theatre—acting sometimes in encouragement, sometimes in check, of the aspirations of whatever the directing body may be.

When you found a Repertory theatre, amateur or professional, see to it that your Producer has no special temptation to act if he is an actor, and generally speaking I think he ought to be. In any case, do not hand him too many bouquets as an actor.

To what extent is a Producer justified in exercising his authority "tyrannically" as it were, and to what extent are the actors, the scene painters, and the musicians entitled to their own opinions and their own methods of expressing their individuality?

Must there not always be a conflict of opinion on these points?

Speaking personally, and every Producer must have his different methods, it suits me best in all cases to *begin* by seeing what each artist can do for himself, or herself, to let him at the beginning of the play proceed on his own initiative, and then only to alter his conception by suggestion and consultation when and as soon as it becomes necessary.

At the same time a Producer should never, I think, be above listening to advice, given at the right place and at the right time, both from his fellow workers and still more from disinterested spectators.

Lastly, let me give my readers this piece of advice.

Let their Producer be first of all a man or woman of general intelligence and education, with a good working knowledge of dramatic literature, contemporary and historical. This is far more important than technical knowledge of the working of a stage, though that is necessary too. If he is an actor, and it is an advantage, I think, that he should be, see to it that financially or for fear of insufficient recognition he has no great temptation to act in each play that is performed—clearly it is better that he should not do so at all. If he chooses the plays with an eye on a particularly attractive part for himself, your theatre is doomed. Above all, let him be a man who is determined that his audience shall enjoy itself . . . having first made up his mind and yours as to what enjoyment in the theatre means. And to that end he must possess an inexhaustible fund of that quality that is called vitality.

*Hubert Pryor*



# THE PRODUCER'S RESPONSIBILITY

By F. E. DORAN.

*Secretary, Manchester Playgoers Club.*

THE amateur in the theatre of to-day rightly fills an important niche, in fact the niche is sometimes the main doorway, particularly in towns of about 3000 to 100 thousand inhabitants in which the talkie has swept the living actor out of doors so far as professionalism is concerned. Let me make it

clear that for me there are no amateurs or professionals in the theatre. There are artists only. Some good, most bad; some paid, others unpaid; but all working together at the shrine of Thespis, each worshipping in his own way, with the furrowed brow of the Ibsenite, the beshakoeed gorge-



MR. F. E. DORAN

ousness of musical comedy, or perhaps in simpler form some elemental mystery in the shadowed recesses of a great Cathedral. There are certain amateurs among the professional ranks, for what are the Sunday evening groups of workaday actors but amateurs in the best sense, giving their leisure and the skill to plays that are not attractive to the commercial mind, but intensely interesting from one point or another to the man whose life is in the theatre? That others are tinkers, tailors, soldiers, sailors, rich men, and perhaps even beggar men or thieves, does not deprive them of that artistic unity with the regular actor, and so, as in time of war, when the amateur territorial and the Guardsman were equal food for slaughter, to-day in the theatre there are regular and irregular forces. And it is the irregulars in the far flung battle line

of the villages and towns who keep the art alive while the regular brethren of the buskin hold the towns. Therefore it is important that these irregular warriors in the cause of the theatre should be as well equipped as possible, with a full grasp of first principles and their application.

The tools of the workmen, the craftsman, and the artist may be the same—the same chisels, the same stone. One produces competent carving, another an interesting piece of work, but the third transcends everything. How then with all things equal is the result so different? Perhaps the same number of taps with mallet and chisel, the same hours of work, even the same workshop—yet different results. Pen and paper is the same for poet and bookmaker. A world shaking sonnet may be scrawled on the back of greasy pastry bag, so the tools are not important. It is not the work, but the result that matters.

No art can come without some knowledge of the craft. Shakespeare had to learn his A-B-C—a point often overlooked by young men in a hurry to be producers. Without any knowledge, but with a confidence beyond dispute, an author's *magnum opus* is twisted until only a bare outline of his intentions remain, though no doubt the cast and the producer have thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Producers may be born, but a certain fabrication is necessary because the successful producer has to have a working knowledge of so many things, some very complex. Years ago the scenery, the lighting, the orchestra, the costumes were only just noticed by the stage manager or coach, and the actors and positions were his main consideration. Any old actor, or one with acting experience, was considered suitable to act as producer, but as nobody thought of amateur theatricals in terms other than side shows for bazaars no great harm was done as there was always the local theatre.

For nearly thirty years now the orientation of workers in the theatre has been changing. Once the author, then the actor, but now the producer is the dominant factor. The producer is the

modeller of the finished product. Every detail of what the audience sees and hears should have been created or approved by the producer. Every emotional effect, every idea left in the mind of the beholder, the recollection of beauty or otherwise, is the producer's responsibility. He should think out his theory or "idea of" the play. He must know the points he wants to make. He must carefully study the personnel and acting tendencies and abilities of his colleagues. His scenery must fit the mood of the scene. His

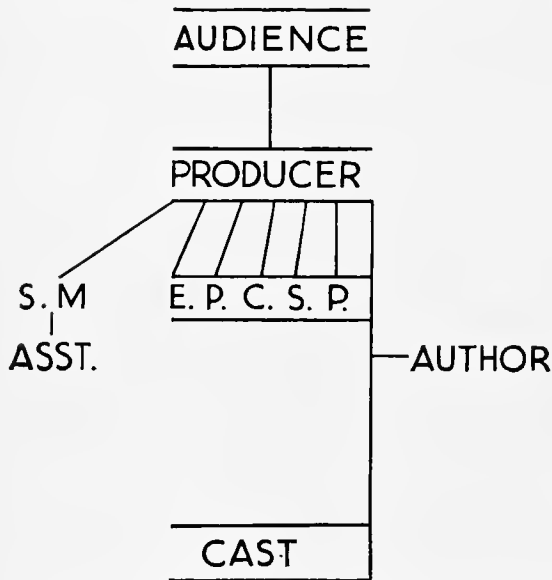


DIAGRAM SHOWING LINES OF RESPONSIBILITY AND EQUALITY

S.M. and Asst. = Stage manager and assistant  
 E. = Electrician  
 P. = Properties  
 C. = Costumes  
 S. = Scenery  
 P. = Prompter

lighting must do its job, even if it is only to cast the right sort of shadow. His incidental music and entr'acte music all enter into the artistic calculations if a certain artistic result is to be attained. He must know angles of vision, sight lines, the various electric lighting factors, both of illumination and safety, the properties of materials, the effects of grouping, the value of timing, pacing, pausing. He must organize the new work that has to be in the mechanical departments of scenery manufacture, properties, and costumes. He must crystallize out into the performance all

the intention in the small parts, and yet all must be done so subtly and skilfully that no audience in the world is *consciously* aware of this terrific massed attack on its intellect through its emotions. All of which long story is only a method of telling the most obvious thing in the world, i.e. that the producer's job is to **PRODUCE**. By that, I mean what I say. The producer has to deliver the goods, produce the rabbit from the hat. The play like the rabbit has been there all the time, but the producer has to use his materials or tools so that spontaneity is preserved, action unfolds, motives are disclosed, all as though what we are witnessing is real and as much part of the fabric of our everyday lives as the landlord and the income tax.

It is this unfolding to the subconsciousness of the audience that is the essential of production. All the previous items have been considered, selected, and related each to the other, so that the audience receive an impress of the pattern without being jolted by theatricality, which is what we mean when we speak of a show as having "creaked."

Each play has its own style of production, or rather a style of production is most apt for a given play, and though experiments in styles may be interesting for us in the craft, they seldom have interest for the general audience. Societies that have their own theatres in their own rooms can attempt such happy flights with great advantage, but when it comes to the paying public the producer's responsibility is to see that they get what they have paid for—a complete show, complete in every particular, and with every factor rightly selected and controlled.

The days of heterogeneity have passed. The producer of to-day is the pivot on which success or failure turns, and he must carefully study the elements at his command.

When all the factors have been properly used, it matters not whether by instinct or experience, then something is produced that can be recorded in the annals of theatrical history as belonging to theatrical art. Craft has produced Art. There will be something beautiful added to the world, because the producer has unified his elements, used his tools wisely, brought the three A's together, the Author, the Actor, and the Audience, into common understanding and to one mind or way of thinking.



INTRODUCTION BY

*Mary Kelly*

**S**TAGE costuming is the most fascinating job, and one that can absorb the enthusiast almost, if not quite, as much as lighting. The two, of course, work hand in hand nowadays, for the lighting artist can transform any material, and work magic with what has been made. They get together at once over choice of materials and colours, which are made to vary very much under the modern treatment by lighting—a subject in itself. The wardrobe mistress who has these modern methods of lighting to help out her ideas and enhance her effects is a lucky woman indeed.

Roughly speaking, the main things to consider in costuming are Character, Colour, and Line. I have put character first since the others join in expressing it. The costumes must help, with every other detail of the production, to express its meaning as a whole, and the meaning of each individual character in its place in the play. Now, from 13 years' experience of hiring costumes, I have learnt that this idea does not come easily to the individual amateur actor and actress, whose main object is to make himself and herself as lovely as possible; and they are urgent with their producer to "let them hire their own." Silks and satins they must wear, the longest of plumes, the greatest abundance of jewels, and—with the ladies—the dress must be *suit*ed to "a small blonde with blue eyes," or "a tall brunette with gray." The gentlemen, too, on being asked for measurements, are apt to add an inch or two to their stature.

It is a hard task for the producer to make his supremacy felt over his cast, especially over the small blonde with blue eyes, in the matter of costume, but it must be done if his costume is going to be part of his play—part of his expression—and not a complete contradiction of it.

It should never be hard to find a wardrobe

mistress, for women generally have far more sense of colour and form than they can use in ordinary life; and the wardrobe mistress must help him in making the players understand that character, colour, and line in costume count infinitely more than the surface of the material, which does not get much farther than the stalls.

If she and her myrmidons are keen enough to start dyeing and stencilling, then they have all power in their hands. There is nothing so saddening as to wander about the furniture shops, looking for a good piece of material suitable for Philip the Second of Spain, or Tamberlaine the Great, and to be told "Oh no, Moddom, that kind of material is not being used now!" But if you can buy a piece of hessian or sheeting, and at home go to your dye tub and your paint pots—well, there you are! Through the boiling of your stuff alone you increase its beauty, and if you want it stiff, a hard hessian sized, and stencilled, is excellent.

Colour is like music—full of infinite tones and supertones of meaning and symbolism. It will speak alone in the entry of a group of mourners, or of a company of lords and ladies to a poverty-stricken peasant group. It has a great deal to say, and you must be able to hear it. Producers,



MISS MARY KELLY

particularly of pageants, often say: "Oh, let's have plenty of colour!" but they seldom use their colour in contrast and harmony. In such work one has to study the colours used at each period (and each has a different range), the dyes used by the peasantry, the middle classes, and so on. Your grouping in crowd work cries out for strong contrasts in colour, used boldly: and so used it is nearer truth than the usual amateur stage crowd, which looks like mixed fruit drops jumping up and down. There is power and vigour in such massing of colour, and you will never come to an end of learning about it.

Line is *vitally important*, for it speaks as clearly as colour: long flowing lines that give dignity, age, or a kind of completion; ceaselessly moving lines that give fantasy and spirit; comfortable lines of plump prosperity, and so on. Your materials and form of dress give you these, and here we see how little surface matters, for if you can get a lovely line with a drapery of sheeting, why should you use satin? Velvet, of the richer materials, is of real value, because of the deep contralto notes it gives, and because it clings to the ground in movement, and also because it alone will combine with cotton. What really gives the line to material is the respective strengths of warp and weft, and if you find the balance you want best in the cheaper materials, choose them rather than the richer.

Study your period thoroughly and then forget it a little; the essentials will come back and the useless part will drop out. And do not forget in this study the pattern design of the time, for it jars very much on an intelligent audience to see this all wrong.

A knowledge of design in general is necessary

even to get the very forms of the dresses in accord with the play, and pattern design, for the painting of whole dresses, or borders and ornaments, or their addition in *appliqué* needs a great deal of attention. The good use of pattern against solid material will all help towards the thing that really makes your costume live, and that is what your producer will be asking of you—contrast.

Contrast is really at the back of dress design for the stage; by contrast you make your characters stand out or fall back at your wish. If you have a principal to be hidden, dress him uniformly with other characters—if he is to stand alone, give him the strongest contrast possible. Hamlet's inky black is an obvious instance of the latter.

The stylization of costume and all kinds of symbolism are a necessary and interesting study, leading to a sure knowledge of what is absolutely essential to make a costume speak in unmistakable terms. As in all arts, you have to know everything about your medium and subject before you can leave anything out; nothing is more difficult than simplicity; and much that covers itself with the name of "stylization" is mere nonsense. But there is a great power in it when it is used with a true imagination, and not merely as a stunt.

Make, in any case, for the *real essentials* of dress, for the right line, for both colour and pattern to have the force they should have, and for a subtle sense of harmonies and control in their use.

This I will say in conclusion—the costuming of plays is one of the finest jobs that a producer can give to a fellow-worker, and it leads on and on to an endless interest and delight.

Mary Kelly

# COSTUMES, COLOUR, AND PRODUCTIONS

By NEVIL TRUMAN

*Hon. Secretary, Nottingham Playgoers Club*

THE age-old story of this still mysterious world contains no pages more fascinating than those which reveal how men and women have clothed themselves, with what devices they have decorated their limbs, in what gay colours they have arrayed their bodies, and into what fantastic shapes they have twisted and

twirled the forms their Creator gave them.

Ever since the day when Eve made a girdle from the leaves of the nearest tree, Woman has sought to attract and delight her Adam with similar tricks, and if today she no longer is content with the



MR. NEVIL TRUMAN

simple beauties of Nature and must call in to her aid the developments of an artificial and mechanical age, her aim is, nevertheless, the same as that of her first parent.

To-day clothes have returned to their first precedent. In Eden it was Woman who was the adorned and decorated one. Her spell of supremacy over Man was short-lived. Adam imitated her leafy garment and outshone her speedily. For eighteen hundred years of the Christian Era Man was the more brilliantly costumed. Taking another leaf from Nature's book, he gazed with awakened eyes on the animals and birds, and discovered that to the males were given the brightest colours, the gayest shapes, and the most impressive forms.

Woman, whilst she was but little behind in the race for sartorial supremacy, never outran her partner and won that race until the last of the Georges dazzled Europe with the massiveness of an intellect that could devise an eight-inch shoe buckle.

Prince Florizel also made fashionable the black suit—and men have mourned ever since—though whether for the suit or for the character of its inventor we leave the historians to decide.

Woman now heads the bill. Her shape alternately swells and slims, lengthens and diminishes, according as her fancy takes her—and man in his sober duns, greys, and blacks, looks on admiringly. Perhaps the wheel will turn again. There are signs, in the cautious revival of colour and shape, that modern man is tired of being the uninteresting foil to woman, and we may yet see him again arrayed in all the glory of the rainbow.

Adown the procession of the ages flit many famous people. The history of costume conjures up for us the figures of great men and women. Indeed, it is impossible to separate the two. Who can think of Cardinal Wolsey without his bright red cape and biretta? Who remembers Queen Elizabeth without her great lace ruff? Indeed, the clothes have become the symbols of the people; and the lesser has usurped the place of the greater. What is Wellington but a pair of boots, or Gladstone but a travelling bag? Raleigh with his cloak, Henry VIII with his falsely broad shoulders, King Charles with his feathered hat, Lord Byron with his open collar, James the First in his padded plus fours—we cannot recall the men without their clothes. The clothes *are* the men. They stamp their personalities upon us.

Then are not clothes a fascinating part of history and of life? Will not their study well repay us in forming a prelude to our understanding of human nature, without which knowledge it is

impossible to advance far in the battle of life? Let us then to business.

As clear-cut a description of the different periods as is possible with such a complex and pliable subject as costume will be given. In order to make reference quick and easy, the dress



WOMAN OF THE PERIOD  
OF ELIZABETH

of each reign or period will be summarized in tabular form in each article, preceded by fuller descriptions and illustrations. It will thus be possible, once the descriptive matter has been mastered, for the reader to turn to the summary and immediately to grasp what is wanted without having to re-read the whole chapter, as is the custom with most costume books. Indeed, writers on this subject are notoriously vague, and it is by no means easy to select the dress of a special epoch readily from current works. Writers have great reluctance to date the costumes sufficiently precisely. This springs partly from the undoubted fact that dress changes so imperceptibly and gradually—being advanced in the larger centres of population, and old-fashioned in the country places—that it is never safe to dogmatize too severely as to what was or was not worn at any given date.

Nevertheless, the amateur actor is not expected to be an antiquary. He is expected to appear in a costume that is correct. I will give the normal type of dress of its date, without the “buts” and “ifs” of the archaeologist. The risk of dogmatizing must, therefore, be incurred in the interests of practicality. This risk is really slight when it is borne in mind that the purpose of the costume is to please a theatre audience, which is never so critical as the members of a learned society. People to-day, with the spread of education, know broadly what costumes are “right,” and they naturally resent the production of a period play that is not in the main correctly costumed.

Bearing these points in mind, all that is necessary will be given.

We must remember that what the medieval mind loved above all things was colour. The people of the Middle Ages had a sound artistic sense that seems to have sprung naturally from them. It was partly due, no doubt, to the fact that they were a race of craftsmen. The coming of the machine struck a deadly blow at craftsmanship, and men turned to the machine-made article which resulted in the machine-made mind. Luckily, there is to-day a revolt from the mastery of the machine and the domination of the trade designer. This is all to the good. We are returning to our earlier good taste and the dressing of any play should be prepared on an ordered scheme of colour.

Have as much colour as you can by all means, but avoid harsh and clashing effects. The cast of a play may indeed be dressed in clashing colours, provided that they do not appear together on the stage. Lovely effects can be obtained by blending the minor characters in different shades of the same colour, whilst making the leading characters outstanding with vivid contrasts. Nothing looks better than to have retainers dressed alike, whilst medieval crowds may be as bright and variegated as possible, and little attention need be paid to avoiding clashing, if a goodly proportion of browns and greys are included for the menfolk. The right use of black as a foil and an accentuator should be recollected.



MAN OF THE PERIOD  
OF CHARLES I

In crowd work the producer should mark the places where he desires his supers to stand having regard to their dress colours. For this he must have full knowledge of the colours of the dresses that will be provided. He can then allot them in mind from the start, and it will be easy at each rehearsal to get the characters into the places they take for the actual performances.



# Modern Make-up

*Introduction by Cedric Hardwicke*

WHEN I begin the study of a new part it is the make-up on which I chiefly have to concentrate. Many of my friends think I "steal" my features from them. This is not so. If make-up were but a matter of painting and shaping my face to resemble that of somebody I had met, it would be a comparatively easy job.



MR. CEDRIC HARDWICKE

I have to go to infinitely more trouble than that.

I do find, however, that when, gropingly, I begin to visualize a character, the make-up, at first a nebulous shape in my mind, never seems to grow from any conscious effort of my imagination. Often its origins will spring from some small effect that gives me

something on which I can build. Thus, when I was considering the make-up for Churdles Ash in *The Farmer's Wife* it occurred to me that an old wig which had been lying, almost forgotten, in a theatrical basket for many years was just the thing for Churdles! From that wig the face underneath seemed to follow naturally.

If it was a wig in Eden Phillpott's play that led to the pictorial development of the character, it might just as easily have been such an odd thing as a carbuncle on the nose. The first glimmering of a make-up is like fumbling with a key at a lock; once the keyhole is found, everything else follows!

Sometimes—but rarely!—a make-up is the result of a happy inspiration. During the earlier rehearsals of *Yellow Sands* I could not form the faintest notion of what Dick Varwell should look like. I was so bad at these rehearsals that I have since heard it was suggested to Sir Barry Jackson that some other actor should be engaged to replace me. Depressed with my inability "to see" the character, I was standing, one morning, at the stage door talking to one of the casual hands employed at the theatre. I found myself watching an odd mannerism he had of stroking a long and straggly moustache. "That's Uncle Dick!" I thought to myself. At the dress rehearsal on the following day my facial make-up was as near his as I dared to get; this, with some of the foulest and oldest of clothes that ever found their way on to a stage, breathed life at last into my conception of Dick Varwell.

Despite this I am convinced that a character solely derived from the imagination is likely to be far more entertaining and amusing than one taken from real life. In life, the appearance of a person has been largely moulded by experiences and inward characteristics; it would indeed be a happy coincidence should these be identical with those of the character to be represented. It is obvious that the face and appearance should be built from what the author tells one about the character.

Good character acting should be like a good painting; not a reproduction, but a criticism. If the only function of an artist was to copy what his eye saw, there would be no need for his art; photography would be much more correct and certainly more detailed. What the artist attempts to accomplish is to illuminate reality with his imagination. Likewise, a successfully portrayed stage character should be an animated picture informed by the imagination of the actor, not an animated photograph!

Even historical characters should not be too accurately represented. Here, however, a difficulty has to be overcome in the minds of the audience who have preconceived ideas—usually culled from unreliable sources!—of what the character should look like. Often the only pictorial knowledge of an historical character is that of portraits and paintings, highly idealized in the first instance and coloured later by years of tradition.

When I played Cæsar in Shaw's *Cæsar and Cleopatra* my make-up was copied from the bust in the British Museum. One critic said I looked utterly unlike Cæsar; another that I seemed to resemble my model more and more as the play progressed!

Some mannerisms and abnormalities are so well known as to be impossible to avoid. No actor can get away from Nelson's one eye and arm. My difficulty when I played Nelson in a film was to lead up to the well known portraits of him painted when he was famous. But what was he like in his younger days before artists had considered him as a subject for their brush?

My Dreyfus was copied from real life—or rather photographs. It had to be.

Once I have decided on a make-up it never changes in the main aspect, although it may, and does, in detail. This, however, is only apparent in the few inches that separate me from my mirror in the dressing room, and would certainly not be observable from the front of the house.

The actor should be accustomed to subtle methods and should always remember that his audience expect and even desire to do some of the work. If the dramatist has done his job well the onlookers will find in his characters and situations

what they want to find. Tell them that a character is an old man and they will believe it; but if the actor covers himself with a mass of wrinkles and crepe hair, their attitude will be "Go on, prove it to me!"

If an audience is invited to use its imagination, it will do so, and thus more effectively make-up an actor than the many hours spent in front of the dressing room mirror with grease paints and other accessories. It is not only the actor's make-up but what he does when he is on the stage that is of supreme importance.

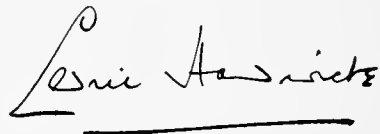
There are no hard and fast rules to make-up; everyone must learn for themselves. Thus, the same colour on different complexions will give widely varying results; one must learn by experience and by constant experiment the possibilities of one's own face.

Avoid making the face look like a mask. It is the face underneath the grease paint that has to give expression to the words. Too little make-up is infinitely preferable to too much.

And always remember that make-up alone will never carry conviction to a part. I have seen actors with faces wonderfully disguised to give the impression of old age walk the stage as if they were striplings. I have also seen actors with so little make-up on for a similar character that to look at them you would put them at something less than middle age. Yet because they imitated the mien and the walk of an old man, their performance was much the more convincing of the two.

The more I learn about my job the more I realize it is not what I put on my face, but what I leave off that is going to carry real conviction to an audience.

Imagination is the great thing!


Louis Armstrong



# THE NEED FOR STAGE MAKE-UP

By ALFRED HARTOP

*Perruquier and Lecturer to Amateur Societies*

“WHAT beard were I best to play it in?” inquires Bottom the Weaver of Peter Quince the producer, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when cast for the part of Pyramus. “I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard,

your perfect yellow.” Wherever amateur actors are under rehearsal the question is echoed “How shall I make-up?” and in all probability the echo of Quince will be heard “Why, what you will.”

Facial characterization is an ancient art. It is known that masks or false-faces were used



MR. ALFRED HARTOP

by Greek and Roman actors in comedy and tragedy. These masks were moulded and painted and had hair arranged to represent many types of human and animal faces, adaptations of which have been common down to the present day. They were, also, adepts in the preparation and direct application of natural colours to the face and body. It is chiefly along this line that science has evolved the modern cosmetics.

Modern methods of stage illumination have changed the whole aspect of make-up; hence the primary need of the uninitiated is to realize the adverse effects of stage lighting on a face that is not made up, and then to acquire a knowledge of the means to correct or neutralize these effects. Making-up is certainly essential for the stage.

Lighting effects are rarely true to Nature. In Nature, light is from above in the open or stream-

ing through a window touching anywhere it can; the rest is reflection and shadow of almost a uniform type. On the stage, however, the performer is confronted by a wall of light from footlights, horizontal shafts from somewhere in the auditorium, floods from wings, batten lights from above; while varying shades of lemon, amber, red, and blue spots add to the diversity. The effect of this intensity is to destroy all natural colour and the natural light and shade, often at the same time creating undesirable false lights and shadows that give the face a featureless appearance. It is, therefore, essential that the normal characteristics of colour and form be restored to the face by refreshing its colour, by lightening the unreal shadows, and by reviving those that we are accustomed to see. These results are obtained by means of correctly placed make-up, the accepted term for which is—“straight make-up.” It is of the utmost importance that this aspect of stage make-up should be grasped as early as possible in this progressive study—it is fundamental to the express purpose of the art of make-up; namely, the achievement and fulfilment of natural illusion. The creation of illusion is the basis and aim of all simple or complex “character” types, for their efficiency is judged not as they appear in daylight, or under ordinary conditions, but as they are interpreted by the eyes of an audience under stage lighting qualities. To accomplish this to a marked degree calls for imagination, skill in blending of colours, and the employment of tricks of shading and lining that cannot be learnt quickly.

Stage history reveals that actors of the past made various attempts to discover and employ a suitable medium for make-up purposes. Pigments were used in dry powder form or ground in water or oil, but long ago they were superseded by grease paints that have certainly simplified and extended the scope of application. Grease paints can be easily blended; they are permanent and impervious to perspiration, when they are rightly applied and powdered, the final

result being a faithful representation of the clear aspect of natural flesh. A further important advantage is that manufacturers of these paints claim that they are absolutely harmless—entirely free from drying, irritating, or caustic substances, and that their prolonged use has no detrimental effect on the most susceptible skin. These paints are put up in handy “sticks” sealed in hygienic packing.

From grease paints corresponding with the three primary colours—red, yellow, and blue—and the passive colours—black and white—any

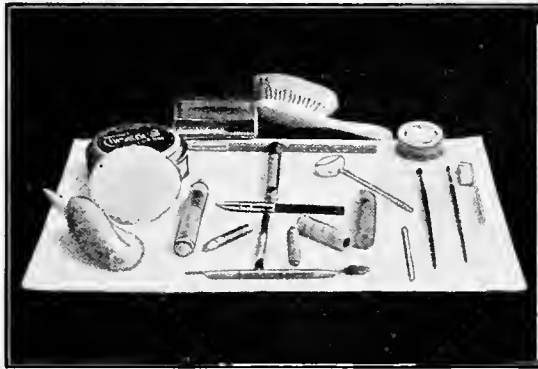


FIG. 1  
GREASE PAINTS AND ACCESSORIES

desired hue, shade, or tint may be produced by proper admixture, but it would require a degree of skill that can only be attributed to a first-class artist. Although a theoretical knowledge of colour is an advantage the novice in the use of grease paints may find encouragement in the fact that almost every conceivable colour may be obtained ready for use. Roughly, fifty different shades are to be had, each bearing a distinguishing number or name, and as there is a reasonable conformity among the various makers as to shade numbers the following descriptive list may be regarded as general. In order that the list may be a valuable guide to the inexperienced, numerical order gives place to a graded sequence of shade, together with hints on their principal use.

#### DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF GREASE PAINTS

##### Flesh Foundation Colours for Ladies—

- no.  
1 Pale . . . Too pale to use by itself. Useful for blending and high lights.

- no.  
1½ Light . . . Also too pale, except when lighting is deep in colour.  
2 Medium . . . Best for juveniles and blonde types.  
2½ Full . . . Best for medium types.  
3 Florid . . . Character and blending. For brunettes a creamy tint rather than pink is recommended. Blend a touch of CHROME with No. 2 or 2½.

##### Flesh Foundation Colours for Men—

- no.  
3 Medium . . . Youthful.  
3½ Full . . . Slightly sunburnt men.  
14 Sun Tan . . . Sportsmen.  
4 Full Sun Tan . . . Sea-faring and soldier types.  
4½ Dark „ „ . . . Old farmers; outdoor labourers.  
13 Chrome Brown . . . Old fishermen.  
15 Full „ „ . . . Roman soldiers.  
9 Red Brown . . . Red Indians and gypsies.  
8 Dk. Red „ . . . Pirates.  
7 Brown . . . Mulattoes.  
16 Dark Brown . . . Creoles.  
11 Extra Dk. „ . . . “Othello” and Moors.  
5 Pale Yellow . . . Base of many useful blends, also Chinese and Eastern types.  
5½ Light „ . . . Oriental.  
6 Dull Brown . . . Old Age and shading.  
6½ Grey „ . . . “ „ „ „ „  
10 Yellow „ . . . Spanish and Italian.  
12 Black . . . Negroes.  
20 White . . . Clowns; pierrots; whitening hair.

CHROME . . . For blending with other foundations, for variety.

Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 Carmine for rouging the cheeks; also for lips.

„ 1, 2, 3 and 4 Orange for rouging the cheeks.

##### LINERS—

Light Grey . . . Eye shading, wrinkles, and shadows.  
Dark „ . . . Eye shading, unshaven face effect.

##### Light, Mid and Dark

Blue . . . Eye shading and blending.  
Light Brown . . . Characteristic shadows.  
Dark „ . . . Characteristic lines; eyebrows and eyelashes.

Lake . . . Characteristic lines and shadows.  
Black . . . Eyebrows, eyelashes, and blending.

White . . . High-lights and blending.  
Yellow . . . „ „



# MODERN STAGE LIGHTING

INTRODUCTION BY  
*Herbert M. Prentice*

ONE often hears sweeping generalizations about the state of the Theatre in this country, the most frequent being that it is in a deplorable condition. I deny it. The Theatre, *per se*, is well able to hold its own with any country; the trouble is the attitude of the public towards the Theatre.

The Theatre is ready to respond, and capable of responding as soon as the public supports it with the same thoroughness and consistency that characterize theatre-going abroad. Here the average public is not "theatre-minded." It lacks artistic perception and civic consciousness. It does not regard the Theatre as fundamental to its social status. Consequently, the Theatre is thought of as something trivial instead of something vital. "The composite art of the Theatre" means little, except to a limited few, and those few are found mostly associated with the Amateur Stage. To the majority a theatrical production merely means a good story told in dramatic form. The composite art is lost. Yet, if people only realized how much they were losing by failing to appreciate theatrical production in its entirety, there would be fewer theatres having to close their doors or to suffer the degradation of being handed over to the mechanical and soulless reproduction of the film.

Many people, partially interested in the Theatre, consider they have said all there is to be said when they say, "After all, the play's the thing." I always agree most enthusiastically. The play *is* the thing. But what is the *play*? It is certainly not merely the words. If it were, it would only be necessary to publish them in book form and to let people read them—but it would cease to be dramatic art. No, the "play" combines all the activities relative to the composite whole, namely, the Words or Text, Scenery, Costumes, Make-up, Effects, Lighting, etc.

Many changes have taken place in the Theatre and many methods have been altered, and improved, but the greatest revolution in the Theatre has been the advent of electricity. Hitherto, lighting was merely utilitarian; it was used solely to illuminate the actors on the stage. Nowadays, in addition to its essential uses as an illuminative, it is an intricate art in itself, and as yet we are only on the fringe of its vast potentialities. You cannot neglect it; you cannot leave it to chance or to the tender mercies of the odd man—it is fundamental.

In "Modern Stage Lighting," the Authors, Messrs. C. Harold Ridge and F. S. Aldred, will write about Electricity, Sources of Light, Apparatus, Switchboards, Dimmers, Wiring, Use of Colour, etc. There may be the temptation to say, "Oh yes, it all sounds well, and we should like to do something about it, but we can manage to get through somehow without paying too much attention to all this elaboration. We'll just get Mr. So-and-so to put us up a few lamps and switches—after all, *the play's the thing!*" That way is undoubtedly much less trouble, but who of any consequence is going to bother about work that is not done properly and thoroughly? Many amateur societies are fully alive to the importance of modern stage lighting, but



MR. HERBERT M. PRENTICE

I am afraid the majority are careless and indifferent.

Here, then, is a chance to remedy deficiencies. The treatment of an important technical subject will incorporate vast experience and scientific knowledge. The services of two men who know their job and know it from A to Z have been recruited and all who are interested will be well advised to study, carefully and thoroughly, this expert exposition.

Apart from the technical side, the artistic side involving the application of principles will be considered. Stage lighting is not a firework display—nor should the result be stage-darkening. Colour has a significance of its own. It can interpret the spirit of the play and create the right atmosphere, but it must not obtrude and throw out the balance of harmony. By a careful intermingling of spots and floods the right atmosphere is created and the superimposure of acting area lights also renders the actors visible—a point that is often overlooked.

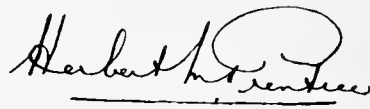
This question of stage-lighting, colour-mixing, etc., is so vast and complex—and so neglected—that I cannot urge amateurs too strongly to take it more seriously. Here is a great opportunity. It is just as important a part of the great work to study this and have lectures on it as it is to have play reading and even rehearsing. Although the technical side must be left to experts, the applied side must be thoroughly understood to be appreciated.

REPERTORY THEATRE,  
BIRMINGHAM.

Time spent on experimentation should not be regarded as time wasted or as unimportant. When additional knowledge has been gained and lighting plots are being prepared, avoid fancy lighting for its own sake. There will be temptations and probably the thought that because a stage looks colourful it is good. It may be thoroughly bad. A lighting plot must mean something, and must convey something to the uninitiated; in other words, it must interpret the spirit of the scene, without the public being conscious of the mechanics of it.

I have often read dramatic criticisms, written by prominent critics, in which there has been a merciless and wholesale condemnation of the lighting. Often it is justified, but occasionally one finds a glimmer of hope and enlightenment, which is generally criticized through lack of understanding. Many critics have not attempted to understand modern stage lighting, so the line of least resistance is to condemn it. This does not mean that the lighting is wrong: the critics need to be severely criticized. Lighting is a new medium of expression, and must be approached from that point of view: "Modern Stage Lighting" will assume that as a starting point.

It is not for me to say more on the subject, except to express the great pleasure it is to write this introduction and to emphasize once more the tremendous importance of this branch of the Theatre. I am confident that Messrs. Ridge and Aldred will do the rest.



# ELECTRICITY

By C. HAROLD RIDGE, A.R.S.M., D.I.C., AND F. S. ALDRED, A.M. INST. C.E.

*Consulting Engineers*

**T**O drive a motor car it is not essential to have a complete knowledge of the working of its engine and transmission, but it is safe to say that a driver possessing such knowledge will be able to obtain better results, both in actual performance and in efficiency. With regard to stage lighting, however, to obtain good

results it is essential that the operator should be fully conversant with the plant and gear under his control, knowing the reasons underlying the use of any particular piece of apparatus, and how it may be affected or varied by different factors. This necessitates a working knowledge of the fundamentals of elec-

tricity without which the most expensive and complete stage lighting installation cannot be made to produce its greatest possibilities and usefulness. These reversals occur rapidly, the number varying according to the periodicity of the supply, and as this affects the design of certain apparatus fed from A.C. mains, it has now been established that 50 periods, or reversals, a second, shall be standard practice in the future in this country. Direct current has principally been used in the past, and, although there is apparatus requiring this form of current, it is being replaced, wherever possible, by alternating current, principally on account of the possibility of generating at high voltages, resulting in efficient transmission over long distances to points of application, when it can be reduced to suitable pressures simply and efficiently by means of transformers.

Besides difference in the form or kind of current generated by different supply companies, there are also differences in the voltage of supply, and in the case of alternating current, differences in the periodicity. These differences have made standardization of electrical plant impossible, resulting in increased capital expenditure, loss of time in obtaining replacements, and other adverse factors generally tending to limit the efficiency of electrical services. To overcome these conditions, the Central Electricity Board have standardized the supply of three-

phase alternating current at 400/230 volts, 50 periods, and already many districts have been converted. This unification permits the generating stations to be linked together, which, with



MR. C. HAROLD RIDGE

The advent of broadcasting has done much to familiarize us with electricity, and make such terms as volts, amperes, etc., words in everyday use. The purpose of this article is to define these terms and those of other electrical units used in practice, and also to describe briefly wiring systems, circuits, and protective devices.

Electricity is distributed by the supply companies in the form of direct current or alternating current. The fundamental difference between these forms is that direct current, or D.C., can be looked upon as a current constantly flowing in one direction, whereas alternating current, or A.C., flows in one direction and then reverses



MR. F. S. ALDRED

the transmission lines, is termed the grid system. This tends to ensure the continuity of supply to the consumer.

The use of alternating current introduces certain electrical effects and difficulties not met with in direct current working, but for practical purposes, incandescent lamps and dimmers operate equally on either system. Arc lamps, on the other hand, require direct current to give maximum efficiency for stage lighting purposes, and this point will be dealt with in a subsequent article.

The electrical units to be described will be confined to those required to give a working knowledge of electricity as met with in stage lighting, the first being the *volt*, the unit of pressure. As steam or water can be at a pressure of so many pounds a square inch, so electricity can be said to have a pressure of so many volts. The standard voltage, or pressure, for lighting will eventually be 230; at the moment it varies between 100 and 250 volts.

The unit of current is the *ampere*, sometimes erroneously considered as the amount or quantity of electricity flowing in a circuit, whereas it is that current which, flowing in a wire under certain specified conditions, will exert a definite force on a unit magnetic pole.

The electrical power in a circuit is given by the product of volts and amperes (familiarily spoken of as amps), and introduces a further unit called a *watt*.

$$1 \text{ volt} \times 1 \text{ ampere} = 1 \text{ watt}$$

This simple formula allows us to find the current taken by a certain lamp. For instance, suppose we have a 1,000-watt lamp in a "spot" lantern operating on a 200-volt circuit, the current required is

$$\frac{1000 \text{ watts}}{200 \text{ volts}} = 5 \text{ amp.}$$

The total work done in a given time is obtained by multiplying the power in the circuit, in watts, by the time in hours. A *Board of Trade Unit* is the work done by 1,000 watts (a *kilowatt*) in one hour.

The last unit to be considered is that of resistance. Materials generally offer obstruction to the passage of electricity. Those offering the least obstruction are classed as *conductors*, whilst those imposing great obstruction are called *insulators*.

For practical reasons copper is used principally for conductors, although under certain conditions both aluminium and iron are used, despite the fact that the latter offers some six times the resistance of copper. Lead has approximately twelve times the resistance; silver has less resistance, but it is not used for conductors for obvious reasons. The wires used for metallic dimmers, although conductors, are specially made alloys, having among other desirable properties a high resistance of the order of some 30 to 40 times that of copper.

It is sufficient for our purpose to consider only the copper conductors, the resistance of which is affected by their dimensions, being proportional to their length and inversely proportional to their area of cross-section, and also to the temperature, the resistance increasing as the temperature rises.

The practical unit of resistance is called the *ohm*, and is a measure of resistance offered by a certain column of mercury at a definite temperature.

Secondary units are obtained from the ohm, one, used for high resistances such as insulation, is the *megohm*, which has a value of 1,000,000 ohms. Another is the *microhm*, which is one-millionth part of an ohm in value and is used for measuring small resistances.

We now find ourselves in a position in which we are capable of dealing with four important ideas in connexion with an electrical circuit: (1) the current or amperes; (2) the voltage or *electromotive force*; (3) the resistance or ohms, and (4) the work done in the circuit. As these are all in evidence at the same time, they have to be simultaneously considered. The first three are the fundamental properties of an electrical circuit. When current passes along a conductor it does so by virtue of the electrical pressure against the resistance opposed to its passage, and any two points in that conductor will be said to be at a *potential difference* (P.D.). This relationship is of great importance, and is called *Ohm's Law* after its discoverer, Dr. G. S. Ohm, who announced that: "The current which flows in any circuit is equal to the electromotive force divided by the total resistance of the circuit." Stated algebraically—

$$C \text{ (amperes)} = \frac{E \text{ (volts)}}{R \text{ (ohms)}}$$

From which we get  $E = CR$  and  $R = \frac{E}{C}$

A numerical example will help to make the application of this formula clear—

A 1,000 watt gas-filled lamp working on a 200-volt circuit takes 5 amp.; what is the resistance of the lamp filament when working? As

$$R = \frac{E}{C}, \text{ therefore } R = \frac{200}{5} = 40 \text{ ohms.}$$

Note that this is the resistance of the lamp when working, when the filament is at a high temperature with a consequent increase in resistance. The resistance of the filament when cold is quite low, which accounts for a momentary high current value when the lamp is switched on, stated to be about ten times the normal working current.

It is necessary to refer to the fact that as Ohm's Law is truly applicable only to circuits in which a steady current is flowing, it may be considered that it has no value in connexion with alternating currents, which, as has been stated, reverse

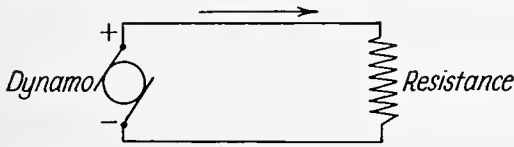
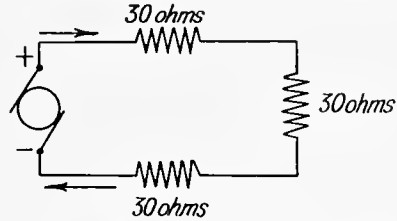


FIG. 1

continuously and rapidly. In considering this point it is necessary to refer to a phenomenon known as *impedance*, which is of great importance in certain circuits fed with alternating current, such circuits in particular being those in which coils of wire forming integral parts of certain apparatus are connected, especially so when the coils are wound on iron cores, as in the case of transformers. The effect of such a coil is to create a pressure acting in the opposite direction to the applied pressure, equivalent to an increase in the resistance of the circuit, the result being to render valueless the application of the law to such a circuit. However, for practical purposes, as gas-filled lamps and dimmer resistance coils have negligible impedances, circuits having such or similar features only may be calculated by using Ohm's Law as shown. For the purposes of this subject it is considered inadvisable and unnecessary to go deeper into the theory underlying alternating currents, especially as it is impossible to discuss them adequately without the

use of mathematics. For the interested reader, there are many textbooks on the subject. They include *Naval Electrical Manual*, by Professor C. L. Fortescue, and *Alternating Current Electricity*, by W. H. Timbie and H. H. Higbie (John Wiley & Sons, New York).

In considering circuits it may be simpler if we

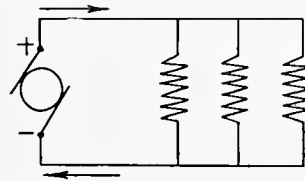


Resistances in Series.

FIG. 2

confine our attention to those connected to a direct current supply of electricity such as may be obtained from a dynamo or an accumulator, both having a *positive* and a *negative* terminal.

If a piece of wire is connected between these two terminals a current will flow, and especially in the case of the dynamo, a current of such magnitude that it would most likely burn up the wire and also the machine itself. This is termed a short circuit, and must be avoided. The current can be kept within safe limits by inserting in the



Resistances in Parallel.

FIG. 3

circuit a suitable resistance as shown in Fig. 1. In such a case the current can be considered as flowing from the positive terminal (+) along what is called the positive lead to and through the resistance and back by the negative lead to the negative terminal (-).

Instead of having one resistance only in the circuit, suppose there are three, and connected up so that the current flows through each in turn (Fig. 2). The resistances are then said to be connected in *series* and the total resistance is

equal to the sum of the separate resistances, in this case 90 ohms. (The resistance of the connecting pieces of cable in comparison with this figure would be so small that it can be neglected.)

If the potential difference at the dynamo terminals is 180 volts, then by Ohm's Law the current flowing in the circuit will be—

$$\text{As } C = \frac{E}{R} \text{ therefore } C = \frac{180}{90} = 2 \text{ amperes.}$$

Another way of connecting up the resistances is in *parallel* (Fig. 3). In this case the current divides into three branches and as the resistances are of equal value a third of the current would flow through each branch. The total resistance offered to the current flow is therefore only one third of what it would be were only one resistance in circuit.

The rule therefore for calculating the total resistance in a circuit made up of resistances in series when  $R$  = total resistance and  $r_1$ ,  $r_2$  and  $r_3$  represent the value of the individual resistances is—

$$R = r_1 + r_2 + r_3$$

And for resistances in parallel—

$$\frac{1}{R} = \frac{1}{r_1} + \frac{1}{r_2} + \frac{1}{r_3} \therefore R = \frac{r_1 r_2 r_3}{r_1 r_2 + r_1 r_3 + r_2 r_3}$$

It is interesting to observe that with a resistance, no matter how high, in parallel with another, no matter how low, the joint resistance will be less than the lower of the two.

Lamps in a circuit are nearly always connected in parallel, but in some cases it is desirable to connect up in series, as, for instance, in a stage signal system, when two lamps of half the voltage on the mains are used, one being at the signal panel at the stage manager's corner, the other at the signalling point. A festoon made up of ten 10 volt lamps in series may be connected across 100 volt mains, but should one of the lamps fail the circuit will be broken and the remaining lamps would go out. When lamps are connected in parallel as in stage battens and footlights, the failure of one lamp would not necessarily affect the others.

Although the resistance of copper cables connecting apparatus such as lamps, dimmers, etc., is usually small in comparison with the resistance of the apparatus, nevertheless it is a factor of importance under certain conditions.

As water flowing in a pipe loses some of its pressure due to friction, similarly volts are absorbed in overcoming the resistance of the cable. It has already been stated that the resistance of a conductor is proportional to length and inversely proportional to cross-sectional area; therefore, for a given length the smaller the diameter the higher the resistance.

Tables have been compiled and included in the Regulations issued by the Institution of Electrical Engineers giving the resistance, in ohms per 1,000 yards at 60° F. of the different sizes of copper cables, from which the resistance of a particular length of cable can, by proportion, be easily calculated. By Ohm's Law,  $E = CR$ , therefore by multiplying the ascertained resistance by the current flowing in the circuit in amperes, the voltage absorbed in sending the current against the cable resistance is found and is known as the "voltage drop" in the cable.

"Voltage drop" is a loss, and reduces the potential at the terminals of a lamp or apparatus to be operated. When one considers that a loss of 1 per cent below its rated voltage results in a reduction in the lamp light output of about 4 per cent, it is evident that the size of cables for lighting circuits must be carefully selected to ensure the voltage drop being of negligible value.

Electrical power in a circuit being the product of volts and amperes, increase in the voltage allows a corresponding reduction in amperes. This is the reason for the higher voltages in practical use to-day, and without increasing the size of cable to reduce its resistance, which would mean increased capital expenditure, the loss due to voltage drop is kept at a minimum by reducing the value of the current.

The tables mentioned above also give the maximum permissible current for vulcanized rubber cables as used in wiring.



# STAGE EFFECTS AND NOISES "OFF"



Introduction by  
*Arnold Ridley*

IN considering the question of stage effects one must, first of all, come to an exact definition of what the expression is intended to convey. What is meant by stage effects? Obviously, one of three things, or, better still, *all* of three things: noises off, stage lighting, and stage dressing. Producers of amateur societies often spend many sleepless nights on the question of noises off. Yet to produce these is simple if one salient rule is kept in mind. It is merely this: illusion on the stage and suggestion off. What I mean is that however good or bad may be a noise effect off-stage it is entirely dependent upon the atmosphere prevailing on-stage at the critical moment.

Take a somewhat exaggerated example. A tropical storm is an essential of a production. Off-stage, no end of trouble is taken to produce a realistic effect. A character enters wearing a perfectly dry overcoat, well polished shoes, and his hair is parted dead centre. What is the result on the audience? They ask, "What *is* that noise going on behind? Has something gone wrong?" But consider the same situation when the character enters apparently soaked to the skin and wiping water from his eyes. The effect on the audience is then quite different. "Why, it's pouring with rain. Yes, listen! There it is! Isn't that wonderful?" Yet the effect may have been of the utmost simplicity—a few peas dropped at intervals upon a drum, but the realism *on* the stage has so stimulated the imagination that the success of the off-stage effect is assured.

I am often asked questions relative to the sound effects that were used in my play *The Ghost Train*, which was brilliantly produced by the late Mr. E. Holman Clarke. Mr. Holman Clarke used to the full the methods to which I have referred. Immediately he established illusion on the stage. The play opened by the cur-

tain rising on a set that depicted an ordinary country station waiting-room. Every detail was correct—a smoky lamp, cracked and dim; an untended fire burning in a dirty grate; a floor covered with orange peel; empty cigarette packets and stub-ends; casual litter; the water bottle with a broken glass; steamy windows; bills advertising out-of-date excursions, and orders restricting the movement of cattle during foot and mouth disease plagues. There was even framed advice to friendless girls arriving at the station. Such perfect detail had the effect upon the audience of making them say "Ah, we



MR. ARNOLD RIDLEY

are in a waiting room, presently we shall hear a train coming. Here it is! Splendid! Wonderful!" The effect itself was perfectly simple, being merely a judicious mixture of thunder sheets, compressed air, a garden roller, and pieces of sandpaper and wire brushes combined with a kettle-drum. There was nothing in fact that is out of reach of the smallest amateur society. But would that train *suggestion* off have been really effective without the perfect railway *illusion* on? Definitely not.

Some years later I used precisely the same methods in a scene in *The Wrecker*, where trains

pass a lonely signal cabin. Once again these methods met with instant success. Every detail of that signal cabin was correct, and the signalmen were real signalmen, not stage figures, so that the audience were in the right mood to anticipate the noise caused by the passing of trains. Almost any old noise would have served the purpose.

The essentials are easily summarized. An audience must be *with* the off-stage effect. They must never be allowed to say: "I wonder what that is supposed to be?" They must *know* what it is supposed to be in advance. Then it is *they themselves* who provide the effect and not the workers behind the scenes.

These remarks must, of course, be imaginatively interpreted. I do not suggest a stark naturalism in the presentation of stage plays such as we have never yet seen. The cup and saucer drama of Robertson struck a note that brought out the interest that can be created in paying attention to accuracy in detail, but I have something different in mind.

One of my main points is that the audience must be with the players, and to make that point is, in one sense, to bring myself in harmony with another section of the theatre world that is ultra-modern. Changes in the theatre have taken place with great rapidity.

Both stage effects and noises off have been considerably influenced by the work of modern scientists who have concentrated on the extension of the practical uses of electricity. Rain, for example, is now the responsibility of the electrician if he is fortunate enough to be in charge of up-to-date apparatus such as that of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, where I was fortunate enough to serve my apprenticeship in stage matters, whereas it used to be, and still is in many theatres, the work of some odd stage-hand who, to earn his daily bread, has to be as prompt on his cue as has any member of the cast. That reminds me of another point.

An effect must be expertly timed. All of us know more about synchronization than did our forefathers, who had never heard of the word.

The best made effect, the most impressive noise off, can be destroyed absolutely if it is a fraction of a second too soon or too late. More, it can upset the sympathetic co-operation of the audience for minutes afterwards.

The psychology of an audience in a theatre cannot be forgotten with safety by any players or stage-hands during a performance. I have already indirectly touched upon this fact: "Illusion on the stage and suggestion off." "On" the illusion must be readily acceptable to bring success. "Suggestion off" is, in a certain sense, more important than a noise off. Many things are violently altered by illusion in the theatre. Time, for example. Which one of us ever has a "stage meal" at home? Similarly, the suggestion that enforces an illusion is, paradoxically, more important than the noise itself. Try the experiment of transferring some of the actual noises of the street, street noises being one of the urgent problems of to-day that await a satisfactory solution, and success in actual transference can become ludicrous failure. There has got to be suggestion rather than actuality.

"The right moment" is closely related to one other point that I will make. Success with stage effects and noises off cannot reasonably be expected unless they are well rehearsed before production. Adequacy of rehearsal will create difficulties for some amateur societies. However, the acoustic properties of the theatre in which a production is to be given, stage width and depth in relation to the seating arrangements, the assistance that the management can provide, and the requirements that will have to be met without managerial aid—these are a few points that can helpfully be looked into in advance. There must, however, be rehearsals, a generalization that must necessarily be modified in accordance with peculiar circumstances. With these and other points as the foundation of activities for the production of stage effects and noises off there ought to be success—but it cannot be attained if the one salient rule, which becomes the golden rule, is ignored.

*Amos Ridley*

# PAST AND PRESENT

By A. E. PETERSON

Founder, Sunday Night Adventurers ; Secretary, Kingston Marionette Players

IT is quite possible that some of the "effects" I shall describe are already familiar to producers, but it is hoped that many will find, here and there, fresh ideas that will set their inventive faculties to work and enable effects previously beyond their scope to be undertaken with some degree of success. I shall also remember that there



MR. A. E. PETERSON

are many budding producers whose knowledge of stagecraft is microscopic.

In the early days of the nineteenth century the stage in England seemed to have reached a point where the visual effect of a play was of more importance than the play itself, and a

study of the plays produced from, say, 1800 to 1825 will amply prove this fact. Realism was demanded by an audience nourished upon gargantuan feasts of spectacle. The theatre opened its doors at 6.30 p.m., and between that time and midnight three or four plays were presented. The "machinist" was as important as the "star," in fact he was the "star." With a change of programme nightly he staged, with bewildering ease, spectacles that almost defy description. Burning forests, castles, and mills, battles on land and sea accompanied by a generous discharge of firearms and cannon, and explosions, arranged with the aid of "fire powder," bengal lights, naked flares and torches, were simple matters to him. What mattered if the theatre itself went up in flames, as it frequently did, another theatre could soon be built. Another favourite but risky device was the

"illuminated" scene, where one saw Vauxhall Gardens or some other night scene where Gilded Vice flaunted itself, brilliantly lit with hundreds of small lamps—and this before the invention of gas as an illuminant.

Water spectacles claimed their followers. Here is a description of a play taken from an old play bill in my possession. The play was *Kenilworth, or England's Golden Days*, and in language unrestrained in its enthusiasm one reads of "scenes that beggar belief." It continues "... water rises from beneath the stage, and Cleopatra's Galley is Seen Sailing down the River Cydnus. Cleopatra is reposing under a Golden Canopy. The Galley Sails into the centre of the Stage and then by Degrees the Water Subsides, then a Grand Chorus by all the Musical Strength of the Company—the Queen Rises—all the Court Kneels—and the Curtain Drops."

## STAGE EFFECTS IN 1820

Here is the dialogue and some weird stage directions taken from Carl Maria Von Weber's opera *Der Freischütz*, showing us Caspar at work during—

THE CASTING OF THE BULLETS (Music).

Cas. (Casting the bullet, and letting it fall from the mould, exclaims aloud.) One!

Echo. (Answering, R.) One!

Echo. (L.) One!

Echo. (R.) One!

Echo. (L.) One!

(These four echoes answer in repetition on the casting every bullet growing gradually more and more hideous. At ONE, night birds flutter and hover over the circle, and strange faces and heads of monsters appear starting out of the rocks, and almost instantly vanish from sight.)

Cas. (The same ceremony as before.) Two!

Echoes. Two!

(At TWO the Witch of the Glen enters from R., threatening CASPAR, walks round circle, and exit, L. U. E.—various reptiles appear from

separate entrances, and surround the circle—also serpents flying in the air.)

*Cas.* Three!

*Echoes.* Three!

(At THREE, a storm and hurricane break down trees—the night-birds as also the faces and heads of monsters reappear momentarily.)

*Cas.* (Faltering.) Four!

*Echoes.* Four!

(At FOUR, whips cracking, the rattle of wheels and tramp of horses are heard, and two wheels of fire roll over the Glen from R.U.E. to L.U.E.)

*Cas.* (With great agitation.) Five!

*Echoes.* Five!

(The audience part of the theatre, as well as the stage, are now in complete darkness.)

(At FIVE, neighing, barking, and huntsmen's cries are heard; amid discordant and eccentric music, supposed to accompany the wild chase in the air; the misty forms of a skeleton stag, skeleton horsemen and hounds pass over the magic circle to the clouds, to a

HUNTING CHORUS OF INVISIBLE SPIRITS.

*Spi.* Through hill and dale, through glen and mire,

Through dew and cloud, through storm and night,

Through earth and water, air and fire,  
Unhurt we spirits wing our flight.

Joho—wau—wau!

*Cas.* Horror!—'tis the wild chase in the air—a fearful omen! Six!

*Echoes.* Six!

(At SIX, a tremendous storm of thunder, lightning, hail, and rain, meteors dart through the air, and over the hill—trees are torn up by the roots—the torrent foams and roars, and turns to blood—the rocks are riven—the serpents, birds, and reptiles reappear—the female spectre re-enters, R., and crosses to C. at back of stage—all the faces and hideous heads are visible at every entrance on L. and R.—the Witch of the Glen darts forth from L., and all the horrors of the preceding numbers are accumulated, to deter the *Freischütz* from the completion of his object.

*Cas.* (In agony.) Seven!

*Echoes.* Seven!

(At SEVEN, Caspar is struggling on the ground, the hearth of lighted coals scattered

around the circle—a tree is rent asunder, L., wherein ZAMIEL appears surrounded by a tremendous shower of fire—ZAMIEL discharges two rifles at one time, and the curtain drops—the audience part of the theatre and stage-lights full on.)

## END OF ACT II

In the last scene of the Third Act a wedding party has gathered to celebrate the nuptials of Agnes and Rodolph—the heroine and hero—but there is yet one of the seven magic bullets to be fired. Prince Ottocar points to a white dove, which flies from a small tree to the large tree in the centre of the stage. Rodolph fires and misses. The bullet strikes Caspar, who is hidden in the tree. He falls forward on to the stage. But let us read from the text of the play itself.

*Otto.* Is it possible that you, knowing the fatal power of the forest-fiend have thus consented to become his guilty agent?

*Cas.* (Writhing in agony.) No. The guilt was mine—and I am the victim. Zamiel has betrayed me. His Seventh Ball has indeed deceived me—by his diverting power it has reached my life. (Shrieking and shuddering.) Ah—already does the fiend, to whom I've sold my soul, await and beckon me. (Desperate with agonizing fancies.) See—there he comes—Oh—Save me—save me from his power and vengeance.

(Zamiel rises in a fiery car, and the back part of the stage becomes entirely illumined with crimson fire. Zamiel drags Caspar into the car.)

*Zamiel.* Six shall achieve—Seven deceive.

(Zamiel and Caspar descend through the stage in flames of fire—the crimson hue disperses, and the forest view again becomes serene.)

*Otto.* The guilty wretch has fallen into the snare he laid for Virtue. The ways of Heaven are just, and punishment awaits the bold presumption of the man who dares to tamper with the Powers of Darkness.

## END OF THE PLAY

But enough of the past. What we are concerned with now is the present immediate need of the amateur producer so far as stage effects are concerned.

## LIGHTNING

In the Theatre of ancient Greece if it was necessary to remove one of the characters a favourite method was to invoke the Gods and leave the matter to them to finish. A board upon which was painted a vivid streak of forked lightning was flung from some elevated position on one side of the stage to the other, and the crash that accompanied the fall of the thunderbolt conveyed to an appreciative audience the fact that justice had been avenged. Nowadays, if there is a scoundrel whose villainies are only punishable by the wrath of heaven all that is necessary is for the villain to take up a suitable position near an accommodating window, behind which, and out of sight of the audience, is a stage hand holding a photographer's magnesium gun or flare, which he fires at the crucial moment and launches the accursed one to the place where stage villains go. The effect must be most carefully prepared and there must be no suspicion in the minds of the audience that the means used are so simple. A spare gun should be kept handy in case the first one misfires, and, if possible, the smoke from the gun should not be allowed to percolate through to the auditorium.

A small magnesium gun suitable for the purpose may be purchased from any chemist who deals in photographic materials. It costs about 1s., and is already charged with magnesium made up in strip form and wound on a spool. To use the gun pull out sufficient of the prepared strip magnesium to serve the purpose and ignite it in the flame of a lighted candle, which should be placed in some convenient position out of sight of the audience. The length of the strip magnesium necessary to cause a flash of lightning can only be determined by experiment and sufficient refills for the storm should be obtained. The refill costs about 6d. In place of magnesium, strips of prepared lycopodium powder can be used in a similar manner. This powder is practically smokeless. To stimulate the rapid flickering of tropical lightning 3, 4, or 5 strips of magnesium may be ignited in quick succession. If, however, this particular flash does not meet requirements and the photographer's magnesium gun has to be used care must be exercised that the Puff . . . ff . . . f of the explosion is minimized as much as possible by firing it away from the stage, or

the noise of the explosion may be smothered by a simultaneous rattle of thunder. As an alternative to the magnesium gun a blow pipe, loaded with lycopodium or magnesium, may be used, the powder being blown across an open flame.

## THE MAGIC LANTERN

A magic lantern is frequently used to provide lightning effects. The lantern may be placed in the wings or fixed at the back of the stage to throw the flash on to a thin back-cloth or transparency. The slide may be prepared by exposing a photographic plate to the light and the flash of lightning scratched through the film. If a photographic plate cannot be obtained,

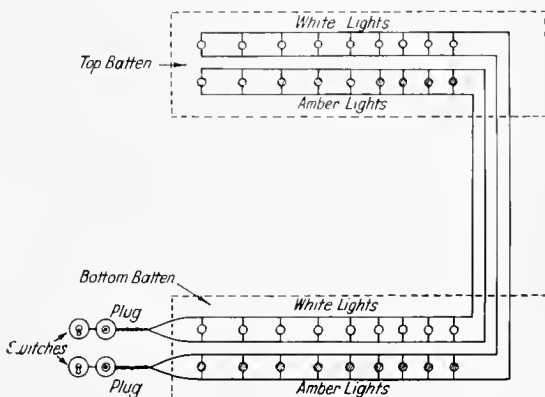


FIG. 1

thick black paper, such as is used for packing photographic plates, may be used. When the flash has been cut out the black paper should be gummed to a clean glass slide. Whatever adhesive matter is used, care should be taken to ensure that the "flash" is kept clear of blurr. After the glass slide has been prepared it should be protected by having another glass slide placed over it and the edges of both slides bound together with passe-partout paper. When all is prepared, the lightning may be flashed by rapidly removing and replacing the cap of the lantern. If the lightning is to flash frequently the operator may use the palm of his hand as a shutter. We must also assume that the producer has arranged a suitable day for the occurrence and not a sunny afternoon when there is not a cloud visible. I once saw lightning produced without the necessary darkening of the stage: the attempt was a failure.

If the stage is set for an outdoor scene the

effect must be varied to suit the occasion, and in place of the magnesium gun the use of the lighting system can be considered, assuming of course that the stage is lit with electricity. The electrician arranges to have two switches placed in a convenient position. To these he connects two battens, each carrying two rows of electric lamps arranged as in Fig. 1. Each batten has one row of white and one row of amber lamps.

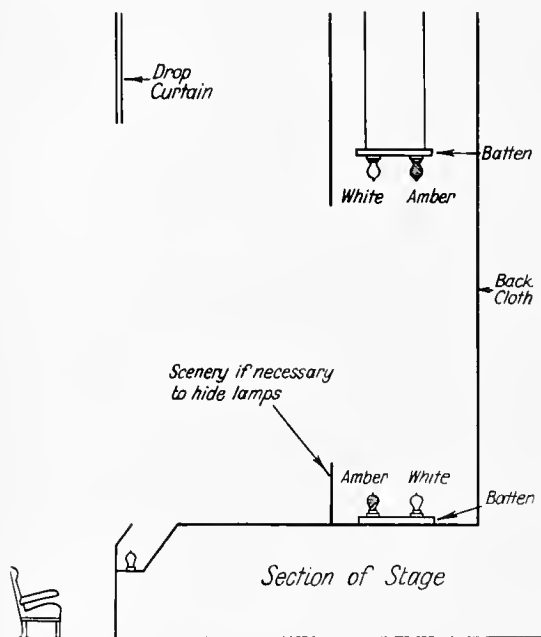


FIG. 2

These rows are arranged so that one batten is immediately underneath the other, and the white lamps in the top batten are immediately over the amber lamps in the bottom batten (Fig. 2). The effect of lightning is obtained by a rapid, alternate switching on and off of the lights. If it is impossible to obtain amber lamps the illusion may be conveyed by a rapid flickering of a row of white lamps with the stage suitably darkened. This effect is not to be recommended, but it is still used by many touring companies.

A suitable piece of apparatus for making lightning is described in Fig. 3. It is a long iron file, with a wooden handle, about 18 in. long, and a wooden handle to which a stick of carbon is attached. The file and the carbon are attached to wires that are connected to a plug. In the wire

from the file is a piece of electrical apparatus called a resistance, of a suitable value, and the effect of lightning is produced by bringing the carbon into contact with the file after the apparatus has been connected to the wall plug.

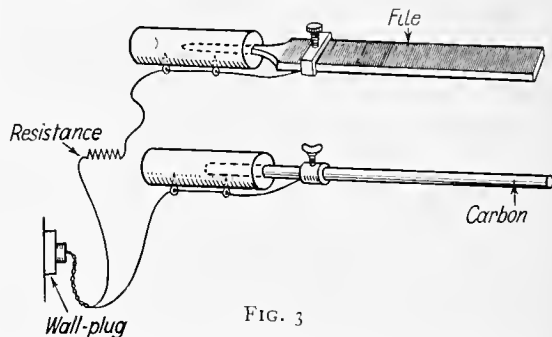


FIG. 3

An improvement on this is the apparatus shown in Fig. 4. It is simply two pieces of wood hinged as shown and kept open by a spring. The ends of the wood carry a carbon and an iron plate, and the effect is obtained by holding the apparatus in the hand and compressing it until contact is made. The length of the flash is determined by the time contact is maintained. This apparatus

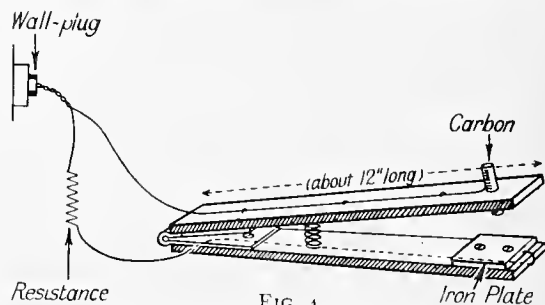


FIG. 4

should be made by an experienced person and carefully worked, and the eyes should be protected against the glare.

It is possible to hire for about three or four shillings a week a "Stage Lightning Lantern." This apparatus consists of a lightning striker actuated by electricity, mounted in a metal frame, and enclosed in a strong wire cage. It is easier to operate than the carbon and file. An elaboration of this device consists of a piece of mechanism actuated by an electro-magnet. A series of these lightning producers can be placed in different positions and may be operated by means of switches fixed to the main switchboard.

# MUSICAL PRODUCTIONS



INTRODUCTION BY  
*A. H. Sexton*

*Secretary and Librarian, National Operatic and Dramatic Association*

**A**BOUT one hundred years hence, when the history of our times comes to be written in better perspective, the decline and fall of the British Commercial Theatre will be recorded in its proper place and its causes analysed from the data unearthed by the antiquarian. In the course of his researches he will not fail to be struck by the collateral rise and growth of the *Amateur Stage Movement*; and it may well be that definite and authoritative information will not be unacceptable to him. At all events it is the present purpose to contribute something to the general knowledge of the seeker after historical truth, and to confine treatment to the consideration of the purely operatic side of the Movement and of the assured place it has earned in the lives of the people.

It can be stated at the outset that before 1890 performances by amateurs of comic opera or musical comedy in fully-equipped theatres in place of small halls or schoolrooms were of rare occurrence, and that the operatic era can be dated from the last decade of the nineteenth century. It is therefore barely 50 years of age.

At that date the professional stage had begun to realize that there was a large and eager public for what may be termed musical drama, that is to say, stage plots, whether serious or comic, enlivened by dancing and by choral or solo musical numbers. The Savoy operas already ranked in a class of their own, and at the Gaiety comic opera gave place about 1896 to musical comedy of a type not yet entirely forgotten. *Dorothy* belongs to the same period, with *Falka*, *Pepita*, and *The Old Guard*, and elder brethren may recall their amazement that *Morocco Bound* managed to get past the Lord Chamberlain.

At that time the theatre had no serious rival—other than the music hall—in the entertainment world of the general public, and lessees in the

provinces had no difficulty in selecting from the touring companies attractions of sorts to please their patrons throughout the year.

It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that the entrance of the amateur into this privileged and hitherto exclusive territory of the professional thespian was regarded as unnecessary and impudent. It was alleged that an amateur operatic society, hiring and performing in a licensed theatre, thereby robbed a number of professionals of their rightful means of livelihood for that week. The allegation was never wholly true. Further, at the present time these societies provide a vast amount of money annually to theatre staffs that would otherwise be idle throughout the country.



MR. A. H. SEXTON

Whether impudent or not, the intrusion has come to stay. The operatic society, with a full complement of 50 or 60 acting members, afforded an admirable, and indeed desirable, opportunity for the exercise by young enthusiasts of their latent abilities in acting, singing, and dancing, which the amateur dramatic company could not provide, and it may be seriously suggested that it was in no small measure due to the fact that the operatic movement came into existence at the peak period of activity on the professional stage that its foundations were so well and carefully

laid. For it was no "stop-gap" innovation to fill empty theatres. Innovation it surely was, but in spite of the sneer that most of the earlier societies were founded upon a charitable basis and advertised their efforts as "In aid of local charities," the Movement would have had no chance of survival if the performances themselves had not been of sufficient artistic and technical merit to justify invitation for payment for admission to them. In this way and by this crucial test did the pioneer operatic societies with great courage claim their place and their right to add something to the history of the British Stage.

As he looks back upon what has been accomplished in less than half a century, the future historian will note the permanent character of the allurements of operatic productions throughout those years, both to the amateur artists and the music-loving public. It has been unscathed by the Great War, by the challenge of the saxophone, and the appeal of the cinema; and to-day it remains one of the most cherished amenities of the people's lives.

It will be noted, also, that with the decline, and in many towns the disappearance, of the theatre or its conversion to a "picture house" the local operatic society is now the only remaining link with the "flesh-and-blood" theatre of the past, unless a dramatic society co-exists in the same town.

As to the causes, and how far the decline of the provincial theatre is due to the competition of the cinema and how far to taxation, trade depression, or the miserable inefficiency of the average touring company, analysis must be left to other hands. Not only have amateurs justified, and more than justified, their existence, but they have become through none of their own seeking the last hope of the British Stage, if it is to be saved at all from the commercialism that is strangling it.

Whether the individual amateur is conscious of the cumulative result of the enjoyment of his hobby—albeit a serious hobby—is another matter, and it perhaps should not be probed too deeply; but whether or not, he is at all events learning team work from which the result follows.

Lamentations have been frequently heard that

amateur operatic societies too often—and it may as well be admitted—waste their talents on works of little or no artistic merit, whereas they would be contributing something to the Art of the Theatre and covering themselves with glory by forsaking the beaten track and presenting original or unknown operas. There need be no disparagement of art or provocative comments upon the good intentions of such critics in reminding them that operatic societies are not educational organizations and have no funds for the purpose, and to suppose that they are is to imagine a vain thing. On the other hand, it would be unfair criticism to deride their prudent, if archaic, habit of keeping one eye on the box office.

One of the contributory causes of the eclipse of the theatre, which set in long before the cinema developed into its present "mass production of cheap emotion," was the stubborn policy of providing the public with *what it used to want*. Equally foolish would be a policy for amateurs to provide what the public *ought to want* in the minority opinion of irresponsible crusaders. As a distinguished critic has recently pointed out, the British public in the mass will have nothing to do with "uplift" in the theatre.

But to admit the truth of this statement is not to approve of, or even to condone, efforts wasted on the reproduction of works that have no artistic appeal whatever and are merely curious relics of a cruder and less cultured epoch. There is a wide range of operatic work of recognized merit, available for the amateur society, which lies between the inanities of the earlier musical comedies and the futilities of Broadway, N.Y.; and it is these works that provide the programmes of most societies and still delight the public.

Had it not been for a few far-seeing "wise-heads" getting together thirty-four years ago and forming the National Operatic and Dramatic Association, which has ever since fostered the amateur operatic movement, it is an undoubted fact that, as a nation, we should to-day be deprived of the privilege of witnessing many excellent productions that are "put on" by societies in an endeavour to keep alive the arts of music and acting by living artists.

*A.H. Sexton.*



# CHOOSING THE PLAY

By DUMAYNE WARNE

Author [with Phil Forsyth] of "The House," "The Ultimate Rescue," "Second Thoughts," etc.

THERE is no such thing as a successful performance without an audience. Whether its members pay for their seats or not is immaterial; what is required is that they should be there. And if they are there and are bored they will certainly not come again, unless they are the unfortunate inmates of a workhouse or other similar institution and so cannot escape.



MR. DUMAYNE WARNE

This is not a matter of speculation but an established fact; although, in the case of a society with a familiar and friendly audience, such an audience would probably be able to endure longer before becoming conscious of boredom than would the audience at an

ordinary theatre. But the principle is the same.

So the first requirement for a new company to take into consideration when choosing the play with which they are to open their career, is whether or not it will suit the prospective audience. It would be as tactless to offer rude French farce to the members of the Congregational Church as the death scene from *Tristan und Isolde* on the evening "got up" for the supporters of the local football club.

Since, however, at the opening, the audience is almost certain to be made up of friends of the company (and their number will soon increase if the productions merit it) they will probably have the same tastes, and, therefore, be not too difficult to please. The great thing at the start is to capture their interest and make them come again and bring their friends.

All this will be common knowledge to the large, old-established societies that habitually play for a week at a time at the local theatre, but, judging by the performances that I have seen about the country, it is well worth pointing out to the managements of newly formed societies that the audience is definitely part of the show. It provides that little something which makes the difference between a performance and a rehearsal—that little something, which, perhaps, caused the invention of a saying that has done more to wreck amateur productions than any other single thing—

"It'll be all right on the night."

Dangerous a saying as this is, there is a grain of truth in it, because there is a difference between even a full rehearsal and a performance. That difference is provided by the audience. The audience seems to pull that little extra bit out of everybody which means so much, and the larger and better the audience the bigger the difference. The veriest tyro can feel the effect that a large and excited audience has on him when he first appears on the stage.

In choosing your play then, do not disregard the audience, but rather pamper and pander to it that it may wax and increase.

Curiously enough, one of the best ways of doing this is also the easiest; that is to do a show in which the whole company is keenly interested. The other is, of course, to do one at which it is most likely to give a good account of itself. Common sense suggests that the two things are probably the same, but with regard to the first of the two points, societies are warned to take care that the committee responsible for choosing the productions is really representative of the interests of the members, and not merely of a noisy minority. Otherwise, they may find themselves saddled with an undertaking on which they are not wholeheartedly keen.

With regard to the second point, the correct procedure is for the committee to weigh up as

dispassionately as possible the strength of the company at—

Singing  
Dancing  
Acting

and the orchestral possibilities, and then to choose a type of show in which the company's strongest features predominate.

In deciding on the actual production the size of stage, the number in the company, and the subject of expense must also be taken into account.

Although a small stage will mean a reduction in the number of members who can appear, this need not necessarily disqualify any particular play, unless it is essential that every member of the society should be employed, as an ingenious producer with imagination, who is not afraid, can do wonders, especially if he cuts the book to simplify the ensembles as much as possible. A first-class man is often able to suggest a crowd by the slenderest means, but nothing much in the way of chorus dancing should be attempted.

It cannot be sufficiently emphasized, however, that cutting is a delicate operation. The danger is that in removing what appear to be non-essentials, you may remove the spirit of the play also. Take *Chu Chin Chow*, for example. If you take away the numberless "effects" that have nothing to do with the story the thing is ruined. The plot itself will never get the show over. So any alterations will have to be made in such a way as to suggest, with the available material, the Oriental prodigality of the piece.

Too large a stage is much rarer and more easily cured. All that is necessary is to set the scenery nearer the footlights.

Expense is by itself a subject on which a book could easily be written. The matter can only

be hinted at here. The proper procedure is to set down in a list for each play the estimated cost (it is the business manager's duty to find this out) of each of the general heads of expenditure for each of the works under consideration, and then to see that a safe margin is allowed between the total and the maximum possible receipts for the production. These heads are: Rent of Theatre; Royalty; Producer; Scenery and Lighting; Costumes; Furniture and Properties; Orchestra; Miscellaneous (allow a good bit here).

I do not want to suggest that a lot of time should be wasted in thinking of ways and means of overcoming the expense difficulty when the position is manifestly hopeless from the beginning, but "Where there's a will there's a way" is often true in these circumstances and a little deviation from the ordinary course, for example an amateur producer instead of a professional, may turn what seemed at first to be an impossibility into a probable choice.

It seems, then, that there are four main questions to be answered by the committee who are engaged in choosing a work for a new society to begin operations. One of them concerns the audience, and the other three the company. They are—

#### THE AUDIENCE

1. *Will they like the play?*

#### THE COMPANY

2. *Will they enjoy playing in it?*
3. *Are they qualified to tackle it?*
4. *Can they afford it?*

If the answer to these four is a fairly confident "yes," they should have surmounted the first obstacle on the way towards opening their career with a success.

# GILBERT & SULLIVAN OPERA

Introduction by  
Sir Henry A. Lytton

IF I were asked to sum up the outstanding characteristic of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas in a sentence, I think I should say, "They are essentially British."

We Britishers, thank goodness, do not take ourselves too seriously. Were this not so, neither Gilbert nor Sullivan would have achieved the fame he has, for, no matter which of the operas you take, isn't it correct to say that we find the mirror being held up to us? In almost every one we find, if we penetrate the slightest of disguises in which the characters are wrapped, if not ourselves, than at least our national characteristics, the subject of rapier-like-wit, amusing burlesque, brilliant satire.

Take, for instance, *H.M.S. Pinafore*. How gentle and enjoyable fun is poked at the "Whitehall sailors"—the politicians:

Stick close to your desk and never go to sea  
And you all may be rulers of the Queen's Navee.

How could those lines have been spoken from the stage in, say, Germany or France if the quip had been a reference to the German navy, or the French, as the case may be?

No, only British people, I think, can laugh at themselves in the theatre. Consequently, no matter what the costume in which Gilbert dresses his characters and no matter to which period they belong we recognize the camouflage at once, and, in our minds, soon tear it aside and laugh quietly, but with relish, at our own foibles and national weaknesses.

Lovers of Gilbert and Sullivan—and the number has been computed "officially" to be some three million—will have no difficulty in discovering people they know in practically every one of the operas.

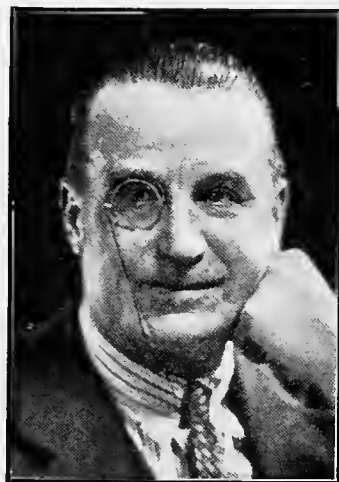
The Duke of Plaza-Toro, for example, is

described as a Spanish grandee, but actually he is the essential Englishman. He sings about our national weakness for small titles and orders!

And what of *The Yeomen of the Guard*? With its happy atmosphere of Merrie England, it brings to the fore our justifiable pride of race. Through Colonel Fairfax, and even more so through the lovable Jack Point, it brings to the surface the "tears of gentle melancholy" and refuses to parade grief.

Nearly every one of Gilbert's characters is a stage puppet and while their creator is pulling the strings that make them work, he is also pulling our legs, gently and with an impish wit. How like all of us British, too, the Gilbertian characters constantly get themselves into tangles of trouble, but get out of them again without undue worry, flurry, or excitement.

Gilbert, of course, was a master playwright. Each plot he conceived had a definite purpose and each character a definite place in the scheme of things. So much so that he invariably had tiny figures set out on a stage at his home which he used to rehearse over and over again before he attempted a rehearsal at the theatre. The result was that from the moment he assembled his cast



SIR HENRY A. LYTTON

Photo by N. S. Kay, Manchester.

on the stage he knew exactly where each one belonged in relation to the others and each movement that should be made during the whole performance. He was a craftsman unequalled at his job.

But what, you will ask, of Sullivan? How can one substantiate the same claim for him? Consider for a moment the music he wrote—simple, melodious, soothing, and delightful; nothing pretentious about it, yet undoubtedly good. Sullivan never attempted anything bombastic about his tunes. Never did he produce anything that was not lilting, charming, sparkling, joyous, buoyant, happy.

When you listen to his operatic scores you invariably find free and easy distraction; never are you confronted by either a "problem" or intricate chord. Similarly, at the other end of the consideration, as it were, there is nothing strident or so much as a bar that is comparable to modern "jazz." Like the great mass of the British public, it makes claims to be neither highbrow nor lowbrow. It is just good music that is easy to understand and to appreciate.

Just as Gilbert seemed to realize that his public did not desire intricate plots, so did Sullivan appreciate that lovers of his music asked not for "education" but for enjoyment. I know no music more essentially enjoyable than his.

Consequently, even though errand boys whistle snatches from this or that opera even to-day—what a wonderful tribute to its "British"

character!—so can the more intellectual doff their thinking caps and openly enjoy the lilting rhythms.

It is this outstanding characteristic that I have endeavoured to indicate, which, I think, gives the Gilbert and Sullivan operas their magnetic appeal; an appeal which is made literally to the multitudes, not only at home, but in every corner of the globe where English is spoken. It is this, also, that has kept the operas evergreen, so that they are as popular to-day as on the day each of them was first produced.

This fact is all the more impressive when one thinks of the great changes that have overtaken public taste in almost every other form of public entertainment. Undoubtedly, Gilbert and Sullivan are the Peter Pans of the theatre, or, rather, their operas are. And, what is more, they impart the elixir of life to those who love to listen to them.

Certainly they do this for those who perform in them. This claim I think I can make justly, for I have had the honour and enjoyment of playing in them for half a century, and never once have I grown tired or weary of any one role.

Will there ever be any rival to the immortal pair who gave us this evergreen theatrical legacy? There may be, but never, I think, equally successful ones. Rivals, perhaps, but never the equal.

Gilbert and Sullivan and their operas belong to yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow.

*Henry Lytton*

# THE ACTING REQUIREMENTS OF THE OPERAS

By D. GRAHAM DAVIS

*Editor of "The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal"*

**D**ESPITE the greatly increased number of works available to amateur operatic societies, the Gilbert and Sullivan series still maintains a strong hold on the affections of the players and their audiences. The reason for this popularity may, on the face of it, appear to be obvious; the operas were written solely to

charm and amuse — they contain no hidden "message." They came into being at a time when the jaded palate of the public had grown tired of the lighter musical works of the day, which, with jingling tunes and miserable books, relied for their attractiveness principally upon smart lines (not always in the best of taste), cleverly manipulated puns and plays upon words, and a galaxy of girls of more or less unnatural pulchritude.



MR. D. GRAHAM DAVIS

On hearing and seeing such works played today, one is often amazed at the all-too-apparent futility of the lyrics, however tuneful the music may be. The Gilbert and Sullivan operas come to us always fresh and charming, though admittedly the librettos (as distinct from the lyrics) may be wearing a trifle thin in places. It is largely their freshness, melody, and wit—both in airs and lyrics—that have made them live, and he would be a rash man who would venture to prophesy the time when they will fail to maintain their hold on popular esteem. But, one

might say, there have been other works possessing all these attributes that have passed into the limbo of forgotten things. Surely, then, there must be something else to account for the wonderful popularity the Gilbert and Sullivan operas continue to enjoy—more than fifty years after the first was written. We shall come to that directly.

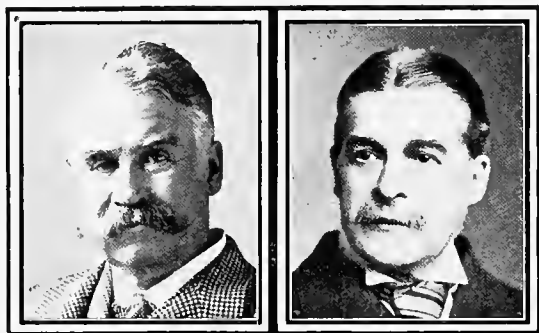
It is frequently urged, in support of these works as productions for amateur societies, that the Savoy operas are easy to present. They require, it is claimed, little in the way of elaborate settings, properties, or stage effects. Nor is superlatively good singing or acting required. The production is stereotyped, and woe betide the producer who strays but a hair's breadth from the traditional usage.

Like most half-truths, such reasoning is dangerous. And that brings us to this mysterious "something" to which reference has just been made. What it is that has helped to maintain the popularity of the operas, undimmed by time, is the necessary—and it cannot be too strongly stressed how necessary—atmosphere. Gilbert and Sullivan together make a perfect weld; to make so excellent a weld some other element is required beyond the metal. And this element, this flux as it were, is supplied in Gilbert and Sullivan opera by the traditional atmosphere that has become associated with the works.

Even to the most easily satisfied member of the audience, amateur performances of the operas frequently fall flat just because this all-important attribute is missing. The vitality and team work, born of perfect understanding of what is needed, and which together make the professional rendering so sparkling, are missing. Thus, however excellent the amateur company may be, the result is good neither for the complete enjoyment of the audience nor for the reputation of the society concerned.

The Savoy operas demand a style of singing, acting, and presentation that is in a distinct class

of its own; a unique art that is not to be found in any other type of musical stage work. It can never be too strongly emphasized that nothing is further from the requirements of "G. & S." than the style of the musical comedy stage. Particularly is this true of the comedy characters (which are not "funny men") and of the younger female characters. These soprano leads and soubrettes all belong to a past period; they have nothing in common, mentally and physically, with the heroines of the good old days of Daly's and the Gaiety. Their innate milk-and-watery niceness, and everything else about them, are



SIR W. S. GILBERT

SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN

poles asunder from the Edwardian and modern outlook.

Vocally, the mincing and "refained" accents of musical comedy are completely out of place in any character. Any affectedness of speech (except where the part demands) is far worse than any native accent or brogue. While the ideal to be attained is that elusive "Standard English," one has heard naturally Cockney Nanki-Poos and Strephons redolent of the Yorkshire moors who have been far less offensive, and far more in keeping with Gilbert's intentions, than many a Josephine, who has imagined that an Evelyn Laye voice and style (than which nothing can be more attractive in the proper place) would be an asset to the part.

An honest attempt is to be made here to help members of amateur societies—principals, choristers, and producers alike—to reach a better understanding of the vocal, acting, and staging requirements of the operas. Detailed directions of the "how" of the production are not furnished; marked scores and librettos, for what they are

worth, are available to those who need them. Rather is the purpose to deal with the "why" of the collective and individual interpretations. A full appreciation of what is required from actor and producer goes a long way towards making a good performance take on just that little extra intelligence that will lift it from being one in a hundred of good renderings into something fully worthy of standing comparison with the professional prototype.

Purposely is this treatment addressed to all who may be concerned with the production of these operas, for each one must equally exert himself for the good of the presentation. The root of the operas' success can be traced to two things, and the first of these is team work, based on loyalty to, and delight in, the works. The other is the fact that Gilbert chose, in the first place, what was practically a raw material that he could mould as he desired. The star system has been notably absent from the Savoy tradition. The D'Oyly Carte Opera Company has, it is true, included (and still includes) many a famous name; but it must be remembered that these have achieved their stardom through their work in the operas. Attempts to import stellar attractions from other firms have proved disappointing and even displeasing. So, you successful Lurcher, about to attempt Sir Joseph Porter, and you, fair Bessie Throckmorton, now to make your Gilbert and Sullivan debut as *Patience*, please do not consider that your experience in these by no means easy, non-G. & S. parts exempts you from reading the advice tendered. You must come to your new parts as beginners. Believe me, a fascinating study lies before you.

And to all I would address three sentences, which should be constantly borne in mind while a Gilbert and Sullivan production is in contemplation, preparation, or being. Amateur societies have a great privilege, denied to all but one professional organization, in being allowed to perform these works. A trust is imposed on them by the terms of the acting rights—that nothing shall be altered or added, and that the model of the professional performances shall be followed. It behoves amateur societies, great or small, zealously to maintain this trust, and to present these immortal works in the manner and spirit that their creators saw to be the right ones.

# Theatrical

# Dancing



*Introduction by*  
**M<sup>me</sup> Marie Rambert**

LOOKING back upon the glories and achievements of the Russian Ballet it would be an easy thing to say that with the death of Diaghileff ballet itself died. Indeed, in its final days his ballet showed none of the signs of vitality that mark a living art. Pure dancing, the life of ballet, was too often sacrificed to unsuitable music and startling decorative effect, beguiling the mind and diverting attention from the essential art. The quality of dancing must necessarily deteriorate as ballet relies more and more for its effect on music and *décor*: the result is a vicious circle. Diaghileff possessed such extraordinary personal gifts that to the end he could still present works with an excellent semblance of significance, to be criticized only by appealing to the earlier Diaghileff. But with his death the position changed. No one could continue his work without his prestige, above all without his wizardry in binding music and *décor* to some conception always just a little ahead of general experience. The hope for ballet in our day—it has had lean periods before—is to concentrate on the pure art of dancing, leaving aside complications of theme and presentation. Here Diaghileff himself showed the way by the knowledge he has given us of the greatest of choreographers, Petipa. We must not confound the glamour and lavish presentation of such ballets as “Swan Lake” and “The Sleeping Princess” with their essential simplicity of intention. They are conceived solely for the glory of the dancer, to reveal beauty in line and movement; the music is easy to grasp; the costumes increase the beauty of movement and line. Strip them of glamorous presentation, change ballet dress for practice frock, use piano for orchestra, the beauty still remains, so that the performer gains new power at every rendering and the artist who can execute

this is master of every type of dance. To save ballet we must gain this idea of dancing as the art in itself, apart from costume, and even from music. In the past, when ballet was at a low ebb, it was saved by the art and appeal of some individual dancer who gave it new direction: the fame of Taglioni made the male dancer a mere lifter of his partner until Nijinsky showed the glory the male role could be. A choreographer can only work through the dancers he has at hand. To return to simplicity of idea combined with perfection of technical execution may be to mark time, but it is all that can be done until the new direction is revealed from its natural source in the inspiration of the dancers themselves.



MME MARIE RAMBERT  
*Photo by Madame Yevonde*

Another important factor is that the theatrical public undergoes a process of training parallel with that of the performers. In Russia the audience was highly trained to appreciate the most subtle technical distinctions between its favourites: it was out of the question that personal charm should cover imperfect technique. The audience knew in detail the classic ballet of Petipa, and its appreciation was trained by seeing the set dances of his work executed by many different artists. Diaghileff had behind him all the tradition of the

Marinsky Theatre, but out of Russia his progress was too rapid and his visits to each capital too brief to train an expert audience. Moreover, no guidance was given by the Press, for ballet was reviewed by music or art critics who naturally emphasized their own interest at the expense of the whole.

Mr. Arnold L. Haskell is the first in England to insist on criticism of ballet as a whole: in his devotion to the art he has seen many hundreds of performances all over Europe, both in theatre and class-room, and has discussed the dance with every type of performer. Ballet in England is greatly indebted to him, for he is a founder of the Camargo Society, a director of the Ballet Club, and author of many books and monographs. He has immense sympathy with the young dancer and is a wise and sympathetic guide to an intricate subject, much needed in this country, where we have no State-supported institution to teach us tradition from continuous performance. If we are to rely on more than mere chance for the encouragement of ballet in England we need

critical standards and a solid framework into which we can fit our experiences. "Theatrical Dancing" should lay this essential foundation.

Ballet will live if sound dancing lives, so that if anything is to be sacrificed to the economic needs of the moment it must not be the dancing. It is, indeed, perfectly easy to conceive of dancing, of movement, as an independent art that requires neither costume nor music to set it off. Theatrically, this might be somewhat arid and monotonous, save to a highly-specialized audience used to the beauty of line and to the subtleties that the acting of the whole body can express, but it is perfectly logical and understandable. It is that conception that the present-day dancer must bear in mind, a sense of power in what he can do, and not the feeling that may so easily arise, that it is not worth while continuing without a full symphony orchestra and a gorgeous setting *à la* Bakst. This does throw a greater onus on the dancer, concentrate all the attention on him, but it also gives him greater opportunities.

Marie Rambert.



# THE DANCER: I

By ARNOLD L. HASKELL

*Founder of the Camargo Society, Director of the Ballet Club, etc.*

THE writer on dancing is handicapped over the writer on any other branch of theatrical art in the ability to make himself clear by the fact that it is not possible as with the drama to quote from a text or to indicate dramatic action or even gesture and movement, save in technical language that would only prove illuminating to the professional. Dancing, like the English law, is built up on precedent and tradition, so that it is constantly necessary to refer to such and such an artist or such and such a ballet. Dancing is a plastic art and no amount of reading can replace watching the practice of it.

My sole object, therefore, is to supplement the knowledge of those who have seen but a few performances, and by a careful analysis to provide them with certain critical standards, and I hope with a keener enjoyment of a great and intricate art, that it is so easy to misunderstand or not to understand at all.

been handed down from generation to generation by memory. The ballet "Giselle," for instance, the oldest in any current repertoire, was first presented at the Paris Opera in 1832 and was last revived in London in 1932, where it was put on by the old Russian *maître de ballet* Sergéef, who carried it in his memory. It must have undergone changes, and each successive ballerina who undertook this most brilliant of roles has undoubtedly left something of herself in it; Grisi and her contemporaries, Karsavina, Pavlova, and finally Spessiva. And yet from the evidence of old prints and contemporary records it has come down to us practically unchanged, Pavlova alone making one startling innovation by appearing in Greek tunic in the second act instead of the customary tarlatan. I shall make it my aim in these studies to keep on practical topics the whole time, but, as I have shown, tradition in ballet is essential and is certainly practical and relevant. I shall have to make frequent historical allusions in order to trace the origins of the dance as we know it to-day. Every dancer is something of an antiquarian and historian. Every dancer loves those quaint old Victorian prints of Taglioni, Grisi, Grahn, Cerrito, Elssler, and their peers. This is not sentimentality, but something really much stronger and finer, something that has kept alive a costly and highly complex art in the most trying times. Dancing can no more die than can walking or running, but ballet, its most highly developed form technically, is in constant danger. It is a controversial point at the present day whether the ballet form is worth preserving at all, and it has certainly suffered under the onslaughts of movements from Germany that simplify considerably various considerations, chiefly economic. I shall avoid controversy or the expression of any too personal opinion, but in its proper place I shall give the full case for ballet, both as an art and as a training, as against Greek dancing, modern German dancing, and various "natural" methods. In any case I shall deal with ballet first and at considerable length, because



MR. ARNOLD L. HASKELL

Dancing, perhaps more than any other art, is dependent upon tradition, especially the particular branch of dancing, known as ballet, with which I will begin these studies. While in the whole of dramatic art tradition is valuable, in the art of ballet it is vital, for although there are many known methods, chiefly German at the present day, of keeping a written record of a ballet, very much in the manner of a musical score, in actual practice this has rarely been done owing to its immense technical difficulties, and works have

practically every form of stage dancing at the present day is born from it, and our interest is in the theatre, rather than in the concert hall or the village green.

I shall first deal with a subject common to all dancing, "The Dancer and Her Attributes," with the economics of dancing, the position of the male dancer, and finally with the dancer's mission. I shall then leave the performer to



TAMARA KARSAVINA IN "PETROUCHKA"

discuss ballet and its composition, and I shall try to situate it in the arts. Before leaving ballet I shall trace its moods and developments through the last century. Every other topic that I shall discuss after that, acrobatic dancing, musical comedy, or the advanced modern schools, will have a direct bearing on what has gone before. In my analysis of choreography ("the art of creating movement in ballet") I shall make use of much material that has been put at my disposal by Fokine, creator of so many dance masterpieces. This material, hitherto unpublished, is of im-

mense value not only on account of Fokine's genius but because of the position he occupies halfway between the old and the new. It will show clearly the artistic genesis of the Russian ballet, admittedly the peak of theatrical dancing.

In our first consideration, before we go into any detail, either historical or actual, or discuss different schools of dancing, we are on common ground. The dancer, whether in ballet, concert or music hall, requires much the same attributes. There are certain questions that I as a critic of dancing invariably ask myself, when I see a dancer for the first time. The answer to those questions will give us certain critical standards.

The first vital point is the dancer's body. Just as in passing judgment on a violinist it would be perfectly legitimate criticism to say that it was impossible to judge of his merits as the tone of his instrument was too bad, so with the dancer it would be perfectly legitimate to say: "Miss X may have good technique and plenty of feeling, but we could not judge, for she is bow-legged, her back is far from straight, and she squints." I purposely mentioned the squint because I feel that facial beauty is a real consideration in stage dancing. I remember an old *balletomane* saying to me once: "I always look at their faces, I can invariably tell a good dancer that way." It was, of course, a paradox, but there was an element of truth in it. A fine head and neck, well set on the shoulders and carried with dignity, is one of the characteristics of the Russian dancer—however brilliant the footwork it will not compensate for that. Ballet dancing should aim at complete coordination and harmony, and not at the acrobatic exploitation of footwork. While the singer aims at pleasing through the ear, she may and often does look unprepossessing; the dancer's appeal is to the eye, and therefore looks are essential. It is remarkable, however, to what an extent the ballet training improves the whole physical appearance. I can remember one of our finest dancers as a bandy-legged child whose sole object in taking up dancing was to rectify this defect; she started at eight years old and by thirteen she was so expert that Serge Diaghileff took her into his company and roles were created for her.

# THE LITTLE THEATRE

## and its STAGE

INTRODUCTION BY  
*Lady Margaret Sackville*



THE best argument in favour of the Little Theatre is the speed with which the movement has spread everywhere throughout the country. It forms a welcome corrective to an over-cinemaed world, and a living refutation to the assertion, so often heard, that the cinema in the end is bound to kill the theatre. I have never understood the force of this argument, since cinema and stage run on wholly different lines, and the stage is surely bound to hold its own until the time comes when people will prefer their friends' photographs, even coloured, moving, talking, to these same friends in actual flesh. Especially is the stage bound to prevail when, as in the Little Theatre, audiences, no longer passive, are largely interchangeable, with the actors most important of all. The great drawback, where the Big Theatre is concerned—the price of seats—has been eliminated. The Little Theatre satisfies a hidden need. How remote and drear those times already seem when the only form of dramatic activity open to amateurs were village-school entertainments and theatricals produced by specially invited guests at Country House Parties. Dramatic expression, in some form or another, is an elementary instinct in normal human beings. Even animals possess it; animal film performers show something that certainly seems to be a conscious sense of drama. The wise promoters of the Dutch Catholic Youth Movement—the Grail—have utilized it in impressive mass productions (devised by the members themselves) in which thousands of performers take part.

Pageants are a broader expression of the instinct, which the Little Theatre Movement fines down and concentrates to a point. Those taciturn countries where this impulse is sternly suppressed do not appear to be the happiest or the pleasantest to live in. Acting has this advantage

over every other art—it involves the whole personality—physical, mental, spiritual—whose qualities, enhanced by discipline, are used to their utmost value. Other arts are partial and solitary by comparison, making those who practise them often a little top-heavy. One side of a man's nature is developed at the expense of another. To translate emotion at once into action is more wholesome than merely to transfer it to paper. It is the most direct way of conveying the artist's experience of life—which may account for the popularity of acting amongst all sorts and conditions of men, and the surprising amount of natural talent that shows itself in the most unexpected places.

Perhaps the Little Theatre Movement provides the nearest equivalent to the many outlets for "self-expression" (detestable inevitable term!) which the ordinary man possessed in earlier centuries, from cathedral building downwards. Then really *did* exist a popular art in the widest sense of the term—produced by the People for *themselves*, not tyrannically imposed upon them from above. It is wholesome in this, too, that it utilizes not emotional power alone, but every other faculty, gifts of design, carpentry, dress-making, and all kindred talents, with often astonishing results. Unpromising materials are



LADY MARGARET SACKVILLE

magically persuaded to give their best and excellent bricks are produced from very imperfect straw. I have seen on a miniature stage in the dreariest of Church Halls, where the producers were, for good or ill, entirely unhampered by money, effects far more memorable than many elaborate, costly productions. Surprising, too, is the feeling of space that it is possible to achieve on the smallest stage!

I remember my delighted amazement at the richness, space, and atmosphere that were suggested when some years ago a phantasy of my own was produced in the Little Theatre by the Bath Citizen House Players. Those concerned in such an enterprise must be "educating" themselves in the very fullest sense of that ambiguous word—if only from the fresh uses to which they learn to put familiar material. The Little Theatre is, perhaps, misnamed. Little in compass, it is great in results. Its activities must have brought a new life to many, where dramatic and practical talents have been suppressed, not always healthily, and in the right hands its possibilities of future development are surely incalculable.

The richer the producer's temperament, the keener his sense of poetry, colour, form, sound, the wider his imaginative experience, welded

together (it goes without saying) by a clear sense of direction, with sufficient character to impress it on others, so much the more successful will he be. The art of the Little Theatre may be described as a synthesis of all the arts, where all gifts, including a sense of humour, find their place. It is a great mistake to confine poetry to print, or paint to canvas, or form to statuary. They should be given a holiday sometimes from their various confining mediums and show themselves in new guises. And they are all included in, and necessary to, good stagecraft. After all, the origin of the word *ballet*—I quote from what I trust is good authority—is *ballata*, meaning "a song sung in dancing," from which sprang the dramatic and unique ballad poetry. How impoverished is the merely *recited* compared with the *acted* ballad only those who have heard and seen both can properly realize. This is surely a very healthy and natural alliance. Poetry is allowed feet as well as wings. The Little Theatre calls upon all the arts to take action, freeing them from the too great passivity which modern conditions have thrust upon them. It may perhaps not too fancifully be considered from this angle as the Prince who rouses sleeping or dozing beauty into renewed activity.

Margaret Sachille

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# PLAY PRODUCTION IN THE LITTLE THEATRE

By CONSUELO DE REYES

*Producer, Little Theatre, Citizen House, Bath, and Everyman Theatre, Hampstead ; Lecturer in Drama, University College, Exeter*

THE vast educational and social possibilities afforded by a study of drama and its creative interpretation in the form of the school play have been still further emphasized by the report published by the Board of Education on the use of Drama in Schools until it seems that the training of the future will find in drama the greatest of all instruments, not only for self-expression but also for communal service.



MISS CONSUELO DE REYES

One of the chief characteristics of this century is undoubtedly its emphasis on creative work as an antidote to the vast materialism that besets us, and nowhere can the crea-

tive urge find better or more satisfying realization than in the field of drama. Moreover, drama is essentially a synthetic art. To it must be brought a sense of literature for the proper appreciation of the play; the artist's eye for colour, as the expression of the main symbolism of the theme; the musician's ear for sound; the architect's sense of line and proportion that must be apparent in the setting, however simple; the designer's sense of beauty and of fitness in the costumes; the dancer's knowledge of rhythm and grouping in the movement; the producer's sense of vital interpretation and poise. It is through these many aspects that drama makes its great appeal both to the educationist and to the individual. Of no other art

can it be said that it is a union of all the arts, and no other subject can effectively link together so many members of widely varying capabilities who can, none the less, all make some valuable contribution to the common good. Moreover, drama is essentially the English contribution to the world. Other nations have surpassed our race in the glories of their painting and architecture, but England has produced the world's greatest dramatist and possesses a dramatic literature that is unrivalled.

Play production is of especial value, not only in the training of young children, who, if allowed to develop naturally are perfect artists, but also in all forms of adult education such as evening continuation classes, institutes and clubs where the great desire is always to "do something" and to experience a period of mental and physical activity after the tedium of the day's routine. Many a boy and girl will be attracted to a dramatic group who could not be lured merely to an "evening class" as such, and once there all other knowledge will become open to them and they will assimilate it eagerly without the slightest feeling that they are being "educated."

Ultimately it is the "communicableness" of drama that is its crowning virtue. Not only does the actual play performance form an invaluable link between parent and school, but the player learns to give of himself and of his own personality, to test the power of his representation upon others, and to appreciate their response to it. He is made aware that all works of genius are some corner of experience seen through the medium of the artist's individuality and translated into communal form, and with this realization his sense of social awareness and of citizenship grows.

With such vital and energizing forces then at work, it is small wonder that we find drama occupying an ever-increasing sphere in every modern school or institute curriculum.

One of the most essential features about all acting is that it should allow a large margin for improvisation. This is apparent to all who undertake the dramatic training of children. The small child acts its criticisms and derivations of life, such as playing school, keeping shop, etc., wholly unconsciously and utterly delightedly, but the moment that the self-same child is given lines and asked to learn a part by heart, he becomes rigid and self-conscious. This is because the set speech and the calculated movement are learnt long before the actor has reached any interpretation of his part, before he has thought himself into it, and consequently a hard mould has been set into which the spirit can never afterwards be poured.



INTERIOR OF LITTLE THEATRE, BATH

To obviate this, the producer of the school group should first tell the story of the play, then allow the players to discuss their own ideas of each of the characters and with what characteristics they should be played. Much interest will be shown in the manner in which one character will re-act upon another, and here the central truth of all drama is reached in the inter-action of character.

From such round-table discussion, it is an easy and informal matter to ask the actors to make a rough plan of the scenes and movements on the stage, inventing their own words and business. However elementary these attempts may be, they will have about them a quality and a simplicity that will give sincerity and point to the final production. Moreover, everything that the actor does will have intensity and meaning, because it will arise simply out of the situation and of his interpretation of it.

The last stage, not the first, will be to study the text and to memorize the lines, whereby the essence of the dramatic situation—already made a part of the actor's individual experience—is to be transmitted to the audience. It is this quality that all great dramatic art should give—a criticism of life, seen through the medium of the artist's personality and plus his interpretation of it. The dramatist must always be the seer and the prophet—the man and woman aware of the blind aspirations of their time and able to give them visible form. It is precisely this quality of awareness that forms one of the chief delights of drama, since new avenues of thought open up perpetually before the mind of the spectator. A corresponding vitality must be apparent in every one of the players, or else the scenes will drag, and in order to secure this, it is essential that all the players should feel the sweep and impetus of the main action.

Every group or company possesses a certain number of shy members who are reluctant to come forward, and for them the best early training is a ritual or ceremonial play. The average child or beginner acts better as a member of a group than as an individual. Pageants, crowds, processions, give them this opportunity. They can merge their identity in the group and yet at the same time develop their own personality. The best advice that can be offered to any dramatic group at the onset of their career is that given by Sir Barry Jackson, of the Birmingham Repertory Players, to start with a *Miracle* or *Mystery Play*. The very nature of the subject will demand a simplicity and a sincerity that will prove the most excellent ground work for the players. The form and austerity of the play with its simple, poignant sentences will provide an excellent example of diction. That such a play would presumably be given at a festival period will further enhance its appeal, and it will gain enormously from the fact that the audience will come in the right mood, knowing what to expect. A contact between players and audience will thus be immediately established.

When a successful representation of a mystery play has been accomplished, the next step in the training of any group may well be to present a historical play, if possible emphasizing some aspect of local history. There are few places in



England that do not possess some local legend or link with the past, and the provision of such a play may well fall within the sphere of the local dramatist. Here again the local spirit of drama will be emphasized, and the group become "native to the soil." In this manner a definite pride of place and a sense of citizenship will be developed. Dramatic centres, such as Women's Institutes, have already done much valuable work in this respect, and to them and to kindred societies must be due in great measure the present dramatic re-kindling of England's past.

An excellent method of acquainting groups with dramatic literature is the formation of play reading societies. This is a system that is largely adopted in community groups and school societies where a monthly play reading circle is formed. The greatest literature of our age is being written to-day in dramatic form, and those who wish to form a clear understanding and criticism of the period in which they live are called upon to study it. Moreover, such a knowledge of dramatic form will add greatly to ease in interpreting it, and frequently an awkward or nervous player will lose all his former limitation in acting upon a stage, after he has taken part in several dramatic readings and thus purged himself of self-consciousness.

The research work in historical plays is of great importance and can easily be made to interest non-acting members, who will find their time fully occupied in looking up historical details, planning costumes, etc. Frequently members of the audience can be invited to join some literary or historical ramble connected with the subject of the play. This will give it redoubled interest and form a point of union between actors and audience. Throughout its work the Little Theatre must make the utmost of its chief characteristic, which is that of intimacy. Every individual member of the audience as well as the players must experience the team spirit and feel that he has his contribution to give. Discussions and debates during the run of any play, or for half an hour following matinee performances, during which the audience are invited to meet the players and to exchange views on the subject of the play, will greatly assist in building up a "live" audience, keen to support the players and to assist in building up the reputation of the

Little Theatre. If the play happens to be one dealing with local history, it is common to find an audience composed of members who rarely frequent a theatre, for such a play will appeal to the historian, the antiquarian, and the local patriot. In the Little Theatre at Bath, the most popular plays are always those that deal with some period



THE APRON STAGE, LITTLE THEATRE, BATH  
(Note rounded steps leading into Auditorium.)

of the city's past, such as *The Rivals* and *Monsieur Beaucaire*, or of the visit of some famous character to the city, such as Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, or Samuel Pepys, and such plays are assured of a long run. Properties and furniture of the period and heirloom costumes are frequently presented to the players by unknown friends, anxious that the play should be correct in every detail and do the city credit.

The choice of plays is the most important factor in the success of any producing group, whether amateur or professional. It is also the hardest problem that any producer has to face. What makes a successful play? This is a problem

that no manager, however expert, can predict accurately. There are thousands of plays, both published and unpublished, from which to choose, but the wealth of material seems to make the problem more difficult.

The first step is to consider the actors and the stage. The play should possess a definite appeal and meaning for the players. They should be capable of acting it and the set of the play should not outrun the limitations of the stage. The most satisfactory method is to have a small play-reading committee on the look-out for suitable plays. This avoids having to choose a play hurriedly at the last moment. At Citizen House an Advisory Bureau collects information from all parts of Great Britain and America concerning the suitability and acting possibilities of plays of every type. This accumulated knowledge is at the disposal of any group, since a play that has been found successful in certain given circumstances will save much time and trouble in selection, when these conditions are repeated.

Usually little difficulty is found in convincing a group that a play is desirable, but if the members cannot be persuaded it is better to drop the play, for the whole-hearted desire of members to do a play is the greatest factor in its success.

The number, ability, experience, and maturity of all possible actors must be the next consideration. If only a small number of actors is available, any play with a large cast should be ruled out, since the system of doubling is seldom successful. In any group comprised of young actors, the problem arises as to what plays fall within their scope. Frequently the intellectual experience of actors may be exceeded as long as the play is not beyond their emotional grasp. Thus young people can act the emotional characters of Shakespeare's plays where the psychological studies of Ibsen would be beyond their reach. Wherever the play calls for specialized physique or technique on the part of one of its characters, it is unwise to attempt that play unless such an actor is available. Thus no producer should attempt Henry IV unless he has a suitable Falstaff in sight, but conversely the presence in the group of one or two outstanding individuals may make possible the success of a play from the start.

Any play which has been done recently in

town or country or with which the audience is already familiar starts with a severe handicap. The province of the Little Theatre or of the small Community Group is to act as a nursery, and to produce new or little known plays, which, whatever their merits or demerits, will at any rate possess the incomparable charm of freshness. A play must be chosen that can be staged and dressed with the facilities that the group possesses. A simple production that is well done and succeeds will give the staff and players far greater confidence than any complicated play that is less successfully done.

A final consideration must be the literary value of the play. Apart from theatrical effectiveness, the play must possess style. There is nothing more wearying both to actors and audience than the play that is purely commonplace, but a great play that is both "good theatre" and has literary value will prove a constant pleasure.

Directly the play has been selected, the producer must decide upon the method whereby he will emphasize the theme of each scene; his production must work up to an apex and, above all, he must work for clarity of diction and for speed. It is weak for a production to drag, as then the attention of the audience will visibly slacken and it will become practically impossible for a later scene to recapture it.

The fall of the curtain on each scene should, where possible, crystallize the argument, and the final situation should be so strong as to impress itself upon the minds of the audience until the next scene rises.

One of the most essential factors in dramatic work is that of timing. There is always a tendency on the part of amateurs to pause for an intake of breath at the start of their cue. This entirely ruins the speed and continuity of the scene. Quick response is essential, and may be likened to the tennis ball, instantly returned over the net by the good player, allowed to fall to the ground and to break continuity by the indifferent player.

The second player should speak immediately after the last word of the first player, and just as the delight of watching a game consists in following the quick return of the ball, so the audience will gain added enjoyment from the vitality of the play and players.

# BUSINESS ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT



INTRODUCTION BY

**JAMES R. GREGSON**

*Author of "T'Marsdens," etc.*

**A** LONG, arduous, and happy association with both the Amateur and Professional Theatre has impressed one vital fact upon even my somewhat careless and irresponsible mind. And that vital fact is the great importance of business organization and management in all dramatic activities.

I shall never forget the shock I received on first becoming the business manager of a professional theatre when I learnt that the sale of programmes, advertising space in the programmes, chocolates, cigarettes, beer, spirits, and suchlike incidentals made all the difference between profit and loss. And it was while I was learning to be a dealer in sweets and ales, studying the public taste in such goods and trying to tempt it into more profitable lines, that it dawned upon me, with the force of an overwhelming revelation, that I was also a dealer in the drama and must first study the public taste before trying to tempt it to the dramatic goods I wanted it to buy.

Subsequent experience has proved to me that ignorance or non-recognition of this simple and fundamental point is the main cause of failure in the case of amateur societies. They may differ in detail from their professional brethren, but in essentials they are at one with them. They are both dealers in drama and, although it may be easier for the amateur to sell his goods, the fact remains that he *has* to sell them or perish.

An amateur society that cannot exist without a subsidy is a failure. An amateur society that cannot make a profit, or at least cannot cover expenses, out of the public sales of its performances is a failure. Even the most experimental amateur theatre should be self-supporting. I have known none, and I have been associated with several daring ventures, which has failed when the

business side of the affair has been competently managed.

I am not referring here to such negative qualities of management as may be summed up in the phrase "keeping a hand on the purse." I surely need not stress such an elementary point as wise spending of the moneys received or anticipated.

It is on the selling side that most amateurs come a cropper, in spite of the fact that here, generally speaking, they have the advantage of their professional brethren. And in these days, with the Amateur Movement so popular that, in many provincial places, theirs is the one



MR. JAMES R. GREGSON

form of enterprise that is keeping the Theatre and Stage alive, the problem of selling drama has become the all-important thing. There was a time when amateurs largely depended upon the sale of tickets by an army of helpers to ensure support. To-day, a sense of dignity in many cases precludes this form of appeal—it *is* undignified to say, in effect, "Please buy this, because it's ours and we're friends of yours" when one ought to be saying, "Buy this because it's worth buying"—and in other cases increased activity in production has rendered such a method impossible to work.

There is, nevertheless, for most amateur societies, a tremendous amount of local goodwill on the part of the public on which they can bank with certainty. The West End Theatre may have its star with a following, and it may have first call upon certain well-known and popular playwrights whose work has a definite appeal, but these advantages are not such as to ensure success in every case, nor are they so constant a factor as local patriotism can be in the success of the amateur theatre, if rightly fostered.

Right salesmanship, or in other words, intelligent and live business direction, is the only sure road to gain and hold this local patriotism and support, and the first essential in good salesmanship is to have something good to sell. Do not be afraid of giving your public the best plays of every time and type. Let your programme be as varied and as catholic as possible. Be not highbrow, lowbrow, middle-brow, or no-brow. Do not specialize in dead masters and make your theatre entirely a museum. Do not concentrate on modern morbidists and turn your stage into an operating theatre. Do not attach yourself to any particular school or you will find your public playing truant. Give your public a bit of everything and the best of everything and keep them guessing what you will tackle next. Better to die of shock than boredom!

This means that you will have to keep a keen eye on rising playwrights. Do not wait until a dramatist is an established success before tackling his work. Do not follow too slavishly or at too great a distance any mode. Try to get in first. Be prepared to take a risk with a new writer. What C. B. Cochran can do in such a fickle and uncertain market as London can be done by amateurs with more confidence as to the financial results. The Irish Players have never been afraid to experiment with the work of local men and

their policy has been justified abundantly, even on business grounds. Sir Barry Jackson is always prepared to risk more money on one new work than you are likely to handle in a decade. Who knows but that, at your very door, there is a local Eugene O'Neill, or a Sean O'Casey, or a Phillpotts, whose work is waiting for you to produce with glory and renown, if not always with profit?

One of the most successful little theatres that I know—an amateur organization—in the 1932-3 season made a profit of over £200 with a programme that included plays by Shaw, Beaumont & Fletcher, Clemence Dane, Copek, and two comedies by new playwrights—giving the first amateur productions of both these last two. Another programme opened with a new first play by a local author, then proceeded to Sheridan's *The Rivals*, following on with a modern thriller, then a modern farce, and later still a burlesque of Victorian melodrama, a French fantasy (translated for the society) and a Shakespearean production.

Programmes such as these are not only easy to sell to the public, but they are also easy to advertise because you can tell the truth about them, and truth is the only sound foundation of publicity. Tell your audience as much as you can about your wares, but avoid the impression that you are educating them. Let them know truthfully that they can expect to be interested, amused, and excited by your programmes—that your true intent is all for their delight.

In short, think of your theatre as a *playhouse*, make it really a playhouse, and advertise it as such. There is the whole secret of the business management and organization without which the most artistically-minded theatre will go under. Business and Art must go hand in hand if the Amateur Movement is to fulfil the promise of its childhood and provide us with our English Dramatic Renaissance.

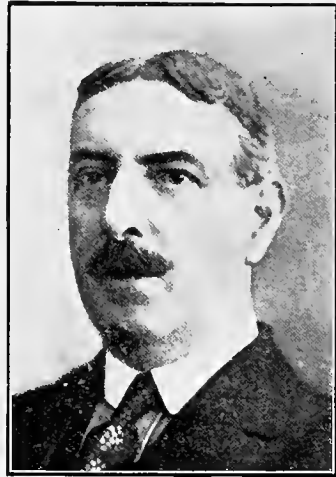
*James H. Freeson.*

# A FINANCIAL CRITICISM

By H. P. HOLLINGDRAKE

AT no time within living memory has there been a period comparable to the post-War years for prolific fecundity and soaring birth rate of new societies in the records of the amateur stage, not only in this country but in the dominions overseas; and the end is not yet in sight.

Whilst it is true to say that on its operatic, as distinct from its dramatic side, the movement emerged about 40 years ago, the statement is not likely to be challenged that it was not until the post-War period that the renaissance of the amateur stage became definite and convincing.



MR. H. P. HOLLINGDRAKE

The causes or reasons are not obscure, but they do not engage our present attention. What is of moment is to note that this spate of activity spread like an epidemic from cities to towns and country villages, with the result that many societies were engendered, on which a subsequent inquest revealed that although they had had a separate existence, they died within the year through lack of pre-natal attention and care.

It is thought that, even at this late hour, something useful remains to be written for the guidance of future enthusiasts and from which many existing societies will take no harm if it should lead them to set their house in order.

It is still in this country an indictable offence to be found "without visible means of support," and indifferent justice may be administered by a Bench of petty magistrates upon sworn evidence. There is, unhappily, no such salutary indictment in prospect for an amateur society that finds itself

in a similar predicament; it disappears unscathed into a welcome oblivion, leaving its trade creditors to mourn their losses.

The unpleasant truth is—for facts are stubborn things—that in far too many cases ambition has overstepped the bounds of prudence, and enthusiasm has obscured the elements of business morality. It cannot be other than commercially immoral for a company of amateurs to set about the formation of an operatic or dramatic society and, without assets, capital, or guarantee fund of some kind, to enter into contractual engagements with lessees of theatres and halls, scenic artists, costumiers, printers, and the like. An adventure of this sort is neither more nor less than a gamble: and a gamble with creditors' money at that; though no record exists of a debtor society pleading the Gaming Act in a County Court!

It may be stated as a general truth that few societies at their inception are possessed of either assets or capital, but many have, and none should be without, some form of "backing" or visible means of support. This fundamental business axiom will be obvious to the average man, and may be faintly perceived by those of higher artistic intelligence. It is an axiom that cannot be too strongly or too frequently stressed: it is the one and only solid foundation upon which an amateur society can or ought to be built.

There are several kinds of support or guarantee: in the case of smaller dramatic societies, especially in rural districts, these are adequately provided by local interest, curiosity, or the patronage of the "nobility and gentry"; whilst those societies, also, which are anchored to a particular church or chapel and give their performances in their own schoolrooms rent free under benefit of clergy may be said to enjoy comparative immunity from liability to disaster through the assured support of their own friends and parishioners. For it is an odd fact that there is yet a vast number of people of average intelligence whose consciences forbid the sinful temptation of the theatre but permit, if they do not actually compel, their enjoyment of *Our Miss Gibbs*, or

some other ghost of a bygone gaiety, in their parish schoolroom, provided that it is labelled an "Entertainment" in aid of some parochial fund.

It is, then, the large, full-size operatic and dramatic societies which remain to be considered, and whose means of support are most in need of examination. It would be idle to pretend, as it would be impossible to acquire, a full knowledge of the financial methods and results of all the larger societies in the United Kingdom. Many of them, particularly on the operatic side, contribute substantial sums annually to local or national charities, and judged by these figures they would appear to be financially sound. But enough is known to enable one critic at all events to state boldly that many of these excellent results are due more to good luck than to good management. Consider for a moment a typical example.

#### A TYPICAL EXAMPLE

An operatic society of 70 acting members enters into signed contracts by its committee to rent a theatre, pay acting rights, hire scenery and costumes, and engage a producer, the total liabilities amounting to £800. There are no reserve funds, and no subscribers except, it may be, 50 patrons or vice-presidents at half-a-guinea apiece. A system of ticket-hawking by the acting members is forced upon them, involving traps for the unwary by the Entertainment Tax authorities later on, but beyond this there is no other visible means of support or guarantee that the costs of production will be met on the due date. All that is possible is to place implicit faith in a fickle public to pay into the box office sufficient funds to prevent disaster. Is "commercial immorality" too harsh a term to apply to trading ventures of this sort? And, if not, what is the remedy? Criticism should be constructive as well as candid.

#### ANNUAL SUBSCRIBERS

The remedy is to convert an uncertain and unreliable audience into a reliable and permanent one by enrolling annual subscribers of fixed

amounts entitling them to the corresponding value in booked seats for the performances. The amount subscribed should not be less than 75 per cent of the total estimated expenses, and this sum will be in normal circumstances ample, together with the cash taken at the theatre doors, to meet all liabilities and leave a balance in hand for disposal.

As it may be doubted whether the remedy suggested can be carried out into practical application let it be said that it can be and has been carried out for over 30 years by one of the largest and oldest operatic societies in England to which I belong. Not only has its subscription list maintained a high percentage of the maximum seats available, but in some years there has actually been a waiting list for vacancies. The subscriptions are for four or six seats; and any combination of these alternatives is permissible for family parties or other groups; for example, eight seats are secured by two subscriptions for four seats; ten seats by one subscription for four seats, and one for six seats. The seats may be booked on any one night or spread over the period of the performances.

The reason for the popularity of this system is that whilst subscribers pay nothing extra for their seats they have the privilege of booking them before the plans are open to the general public, and the seats are guaranteed.

The result is, therefore, attained of securing a permanent audience in the stalls and dress circle with the additional security—in the case of the society alluded to—of having the comfortable sum of £625 in the bank before the curtain rises on the opening night.

It is pleasant to be able to record in conclusion that this financial security by means of a guarantee fund, for which I earnestly plead, has been adopted by some societies. The advantages of the system, both to the society and the subscribers, must be obvious; what may not be so conspicuously obvious is the protection provided for the society's trade creditors.





MR. HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL



# READING A PLAY FOR PRODUCTION

By HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL

*Author of "Quinneys," etc.*

YOUR busy, up-to-date manager of a theatre, as a rule, refuses to listen to the reading aloud of a play on the plea that he cannot "take it in," too polite to tell the author that he is terrified of *being taken in himself*—more likely to happen than the outsider might suppose. Two actor managers told me that in their opinion the late Harry Esmond was the best reader aloud in London and "on the index," because, apart from his lovely voice, he exercised uncanny powers of hypnotism. No unknown dramatist can hope to read a play to a manager. But, in this short article, I want to approach my caption from a different angle; I shall try to stand in the shoes of an expert who is reading to himself a script likely to please the public.

What does he look for? What does he want? These two questions should be considered seriously by the dramatist.

Let us assume that the dramatist (or his agent) knows enough *not* to submit a comedy of manners to a purveyor of melodrama and crook plays. And here I would lay stress on the expediency of submitting to any man whom you are asking to back your brains with his money a brief synopsis of your play, enclosing—if you happen to be unknown to the gentleman—a stamped and addressed envelope. Sir Gerald du Maurier assured me that twenty lines would suffice for HIM. Unless a dramatist is in intimate touch with the theatre, he cannot know what is wanted at the moment; he might, unwittingly, submit something already treated by another man. Again, the author probably knows nothing of the manager's commitments. The manager may have engaged the services of a leading actor or actress. In such a case a play, however good in itself, which holds a big part unsuitable for the leading player, is doomed to be rejected.

However, leaving that out of court, it is safe to say that the demand for something new never fails, and fresh treatment of what is old has a good market. It is extremely unlikely that the ordinary dramatist will submit strikingly original wares.

And it might be a mistake for a novice to strive too persistently for originality. Everybody in the profession knows that certain plays, now acclaimed as "winners," have passed from manager to manager because they were deemed to be caviare to the general public. And yet the public gobbled them when enterprise produced them.

In what spirit does a trained reader of plays consider the scripts submitted? First, last, and all the time he keeps an alert eye on the box-office, because a "loser" means the loss of anything between one and five thousand pounds. Probably—it is difficult to dogmatize on such a subject—he considers costs of production first. The London theatre to-day is stricken with creeping paralysis because such high costs, *plus* high rentals, have wrecked dozens of plays which, twenty years ago, would have made good money for all concerned. A play that fails in London *may* do well in the provinces. It is most important, therefore, for the reader to bear in mind the provinces. A play with many settings and a huge cast cannot, with rarest exceptions, be sent on tour.

The reader is sure to blink nervously at a costume play, or a tragedy. Laughter in the modern theatre is a greater lure than tears. Rarely indeed does the playgoer go twice to a tragedy. The late Frederick Harrison, of the Haymarket Theatre, said to me: "I want a comedy with a well-told story of cumulative human interest." By "well-told" he meant, of course, freshly told.

In passing judgment on a script the reader will award high marks to what may be called the "twist." I have no space to cite instances, but this twist is the inversion of the obvious, a trick of the trade. It is said that Oscar Wilde's brilliant epigrams were pure Tupper reversed. "Be good and you'll be happy" under such treatment is changed into: "Be happy and you'll be good." Any cliché can be re-presented with a more than sporting chance of getting a laugh from all parts of the house if it be turned upside

down. The audience is tickled "pink" when they expect derisively the obvious and are given instead the mirth-provoking twist. But this twist must come unexpectedly and, if possible, dramatically.

Plot ought to be subsidiary, perhaps, to convincing characterization. Apart from melodramas, credibility is of ever-increasing importance, particularly in London.

Tension and action demand a few words. Tension is a synonym for sustained interest and suspense; action is not necessarily movement. It is, and ought to be, the striking effect of environment and circumstance upon character, the arresting change in the outlook of the players. This exacts the art that conceals art. Paradoxically enough, a play of movement may lack such action. Indeed, unnecessary dashing about the stage is likely to distract the playgoer from what underlies these activities. The appeal is made to the eye rather than the mind.

The experienced reader loathes irrelevancies, so dear, if they are well presented, to the reader of novels. Anything that takes the attention of the playgoer from the actual play is certain to interfere with the tension and may provoke a yawn.

One may assume, in conclusion, that the reader of plays, distressfully aware of his responsibilities, awards marks for the "points" enumerated. When, long ago, I was offered (and refused) this most important position in a London theatre, I decided to employ such methods. The play that gained most marks would then be commended by me for production. To any rule of thumb there must be notable exceptions. An expert reader of plays ought to be a man of many facets with wide experience not only of the theatre, but of life itself. Apart from melodrama and plays of fancy, like *Peter Pan*, nearly all the outstanding successes of recent years have appealed to the

public as human documents. Generally speaking, some moral purpose may be discerned in them. This is true of the work of Shaw, Galsworthy, Maugham, Lonsdale, and Coward. The more cleverly the powder is covered with jam, the better. The stage, as a mirror of life, is sadly blurred when this moral purpose is lacking. The playgoer exclaims, or thinks, "What is this all about?" I am the last person to insist that all plays should have happy endings, but I cannot stress too emphatically my conviction that any play which sends the playgoer out of the theatre with a horrid taste in his mouth deserves, even if he does not get, the scarification of our critics.

A last word and a *credo*. I hold the opinion, with many others, that the big theatres on our London Rialto are doomed. They occupy sites too valuable; they exact enormous rentals. More, the screen rather than the stage is better adapted to huge spectacular shows. The Little Theatre has a great future, and it will be built anywhere and everywhere. To-day, playgoers travel swiftly and easily to the Lyric, Hammersmith, or the Old Vic.

I believe in the Repertory Theatre, because it is a grand school for training actors and actresses; I believe that the Theatre of To-morrow is coming to life in the provinces rather than London, because provincial playgoers seek more than light entertainment; I believe in decentralization because centralization has been tried all over the world and found wanting; I believe in plays, whether comedies or tragedies, informed by convincing characterization, plays that radiate credibility. And I believe—with deepest conviction—in plays that present kindness, sympathy for the under-dog, and the saving grace of—HUMOUR.

I am glad that I am not a reader of plays for production.

*Horace Mansley Vachell.*

# THE PAST AND FUTURE OF THE AMATEUR MOVEMENT

By GEOFFREY WHITWORTH

*Founder and Secretary of the British Drama League. Author of "Father Noah"*

THE Great War, a turning point in world history with consequences that it is impossible for any man living to assess, appeared in its more immediate effects to have destroyed the European Theatre as the repository of a Fine Art. This applies in a special degree to our own country where no State-endowed theatre exists to maintain artistic standards in periods of crisis or unusual depression. During the War itself our professional stage was given over to the provision of "entertainment" in the most trivial sense of the word. By so doing it fulfilled a necessary function, but the drama as a living art thereby suffered severely. In 1918, when things had almost reached rock bottom, few people could have foreseen that we were in fact on the eve of a renaissance of dramatic idealism (if not always of accomplishment) which has had no parallel since the age of Tudor Drama.

The movement began very humbly and very simply, inspired to some extent by two bright lights in the War-time darkness: (1) the heroic enterprise of Miss Lilian Baylis whereby the "Old Vic" established itself as a centre of Shakespearean production in South London; (2) the unique service rendered to our troops in France by Miss Lena Ashwell who, from the germ of a "Concert Party," evolved a theatrical company which proved that plays of high artistic standard were, in the long run, appreciable to the full by an audience of "Tommies." The same discovery was being made by small groups of dramatic enthusiasts here and there at home. Early in 1919 I came into contact with one such group attached to the Vickers-Armstrong Works at Crayford in Kent, and thus my eyes were opened to the possibilities inherent in the drama viewed not from the angle of commercialized entertainment but from that of personal expression and self-culture.

The story of the British Drama League, which was founded in the same year, is really the story

of the Amateur Movement, which, since the War, has transformed the theatrical scene. The League began in the most modest circumstances, but with high ambitions, not as itself a play-producing organization, but, in the words of its prospectus, with the sole object of assisting the development of the Art of the Theatre and of promoting a right relation between Drama and the Life of the Community. From the start, the League set its face against any cleavage between the professional and the amateur stage. Its first committee, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Harley Granville-Barker, included the names of several leaders of the professional theatre. Among its members there have always figured a goodly number of professional actors, playwrights, and theatre managers. As a result of this policy, and of the support given to it by the profession, the League has done much to secure that friendly feeling between professional and amateur which is so welcome a feature of our dramatic life. Even the so-called "commercial theatre" has come to recognize that the amateur stage is a useful ally as a training-ground for young actors, as a fruitful field for the discovery of new playwrights, and last but not least, as an incentive to intelligent theatre-going.

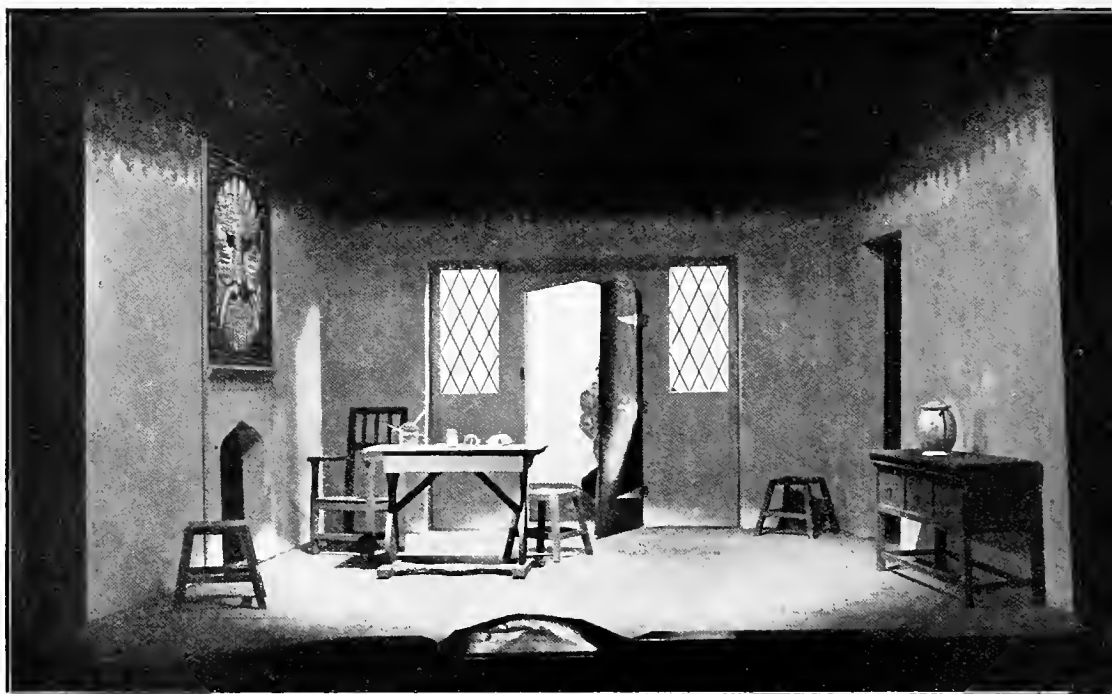
Content, at first, to offer a central focus and clearing-house for dramatic activities of every kind, the League, as it grew, was able to initiate various more positive forms of service. With the assistance of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, it formed a Dramatic Library for the use of its members. This Library contains over 25,000 volumes, among them many reference books of great value. "Drama Schools" are organized from time to time in various parts of the country, a monthly Journal, *Drama*, is published, and Village Drama is specially catered for by a Village Drama Section, which continues the work of the Village Drama Society, which, founded by Miss Mary Kelly at about the same

time as the League, was incorporated with the League in 1932. Already some 2,500 Societies are in affiliation with the League, among them being the Scottish Community Drama Association, which in turn includes some 220 societies North of the Tweed.

These figures are in themselves sufficiently impressive. But it must be remembered that there

sudden emergence at a time when conditions might well have been thought to be particularly unfavourable to anything of the kind.

The explanation is to be found, as I believe, in a spontaneous and inevitable reaction against other tendencies that are flagrant in the world. The moral exhaustion that was the aftermath of the War has left half mankind at the mercy of the



MISS GWEN CARLIER'S SETTING FOR EPISODE 5, "SHAKESPEARE," AT THE CRESCENT THEATRE, BIRMINGHAM

*Photo, Crescent Theatre*

are probably at least an equal number of Societies and smaller dramatic Groups that are unattached to any parent body, in addition to the many amateur operatic societies that enjoy membership of the National Operatic and Dramatic Federation. Individual membership of all these bodies must run into hundreds of thousands, and it is not too much to say that there is scarcely a district in Great Britain to-day which, in one way or another, is untouched by the Movement.

We have seen how continuous is the record of amateur drama throughout the ages. This new revival is not, therefore, to be regarded as miraculous or unprecedented. It is natural, however, that one should seek some explanation for its

mechanical-economic elements in modern civilization. These elements have given us, it is true, certain alleviations from themselves. The motor car takes the town-dweller into the country with an ease and celerity hitherto unknown. Wireless and radio have opened up for the multitude a new field of dramatic enjoyment, albeit at one or two removes. But these last are purely passive pleasures, and a little tainted at the source. In the main we are still the victims of an impulse which, if pushed to its logical conclusion, would deny to us all that sense of personal vitality which is a prime condition of happiness. Here Drama comes to the rescue. It provides just the needed antidote to the poison of the Machine. On the stage a free

wind of the spirit blows. And thither, unconscious often of the motive that drives us, we turn for the refreshment of an Art that is almost Nature, since its medium is the Bodies and Souls of Men.

Statistics of the number of amateur dramatic organizations give no idea of the variety of circumstance and method that characterizes the Movement. It is a far cry from the sophisticated refinement of such a Society as the "Manchester

But the relation, as a whole, of drama to national education merits a chapter to itself, and members specially interested in this aspect of the subject may be referred to the admirable survey published by H.M. Board of Education in 1927 under the title of "Report of the Adult Education Committee on Drama in Adult Education." The publication of this Report is itself good evidence of the important place that the Art of the Theatre has regained in the estimation of officialdom.



SETTING FOR A PRODUCTION OF "HAMLET" BY THE RADLEY COLLEGE A.D.S., DESIGNED BY R. M. SIMPSON, PRODUCED BY A. K. BOYD

Unnamed" to the small club-room in an East End slum where a company of boy scouts are playing, for the first time in their lives perhaps, some simple farce or melodrama. And then again, there is the "school play" to be found in educational establishments of every class and type. These plays take place often enough at the time of the end-of-term celebrations, though sometimes we find that play-acting is introduced as part of the normal curriculum as an aid to the teaching of History or Literature. Though this "dramatic method in education" is widely practised, I have sometimes thought it strange that it is not in more frequent use as a means to the learning of foreign languages. There are plays in all the important foreign languages that are admirably adapted to class work from day to day.

And what, it may be asked, of the Future? That numerically the Movement can continue to grow at the same rate as during the past few years may be doubted, though when one considers the vast masses of people still untouched, it would be rash to set limits to possible expansion. For amateur drama is not a thing that appeals only to amateur actors. The stage is the focus of many talents, and the painter, the man or woman with a literary turn, the amateur mechanic, can all find work to do, and plenty of fun in the doing of it. That the Movement will continue to grow is, therefore, certain. What is more difficult to diagnose are the possibilities it holds for progress on the artistic side.

Hitherto the great defect of amateur acting has been its lack of any real and impartial criticism.

Whenever an amateur production has been passably good (and sometimes even when it has been execrable) the easy praise of friends and relations has dropped a rosy veil over all shortcomings. But the growing popularity of competitive Festivals is doing much to counteract this vicious tendency.

The highest art may not often be found as the result of competition. But, at least, it is a safeguard against the worst; and there is no doubt that the general standard of amateur playing has vastly improved among those societies that have taken part in the various competitive events now organized, notably by the British Drama League and by the Federation of Women's Institutes. The League Festival takes place annually, and culminates in a "Final Festival," in London, which is held in the month of May, when the Howard de Walden Cup is presented to the best of the five teams appearing. These teams have been chosen in turn by a series of eliminating contests throughout the five areas into which Great Britain is divided for the purpose. Out of over five hundred competing teams only a few, naturally, can appear at the Area Finals and the Final of all. But the most valuable part of the Festival is not to be found in these "star" performances,

but rather in the detailed criticism that is given by impartial adjudicators at every stage.

Unfortunately, competitive organization can, as a general rule, deal only with the one-act play, and it would be a pity if amateur endeavour were on this account to become concentrated on that form to the exclusion of full-length drama. This result need not be feared in the case of established societies with their own following and, perhaps, their own Little Theatre. To such as these Festival work will always remain but one incident in a full season's programme. In any case, the reproduction of a West End success will be wisely avoided by the progressive society, not because a West End success is necessarily unworthy of their attention, but because it will be rightly felt that it is the amateur's special privilege to experiment with plays that are not commonly seen elsewhere.

Finally, as the permanent exponent of dramatic art, the professional theatre must always hold its own in large towns. But in smaller places, or in suburban areas where the professional theatre cannot live, the field open to the amateur is unending. It is on his ability to provide entertainment for a more general public than he has hitherto attempted to reach that his ultimate justification must be claimed and found in days to come.

# RECRUITING THE STAGE STAFF

By HAL D. STEWART

*Author of "Rizzio's Boots," "The Blind Eye," etc.*

IT is common knowledge that in a theatrical production there are many people who work "behind the scenes." What comprises the duties of these people is less widely known. Any amateur group, however, which aims at giving artistic productions, must organize these auxiliaries and see that they are as proficient in their own duties as the actors are in theirs.

Apart from the producer and stage manager, a well organized group should employ one or more assistant stage managers, an electrician, a property master, a wardrobe mistress, and about four stage hands. These all have duties on the stage, and are necessary whether scenery and costumes are made or hired. If you are enterprising enough to make your own scenery and costumes, you will require also the services of a designer, carpenters, scene painters, and dressmakers. All these can be amateurs.

Not actually on the stage, but of great importance to the entertainment, are the musical director, the business manager, and the front of house staff, which includes ushers and programme sellers. Of these, the musical director alone possibly comes within the scope of stagecraft, but the smooth working of the front of the house is an important factor, for a well run auditorium keeps the audience in a contented frame of mind.

Most societies realize the value of capable direction. I wish here to emphasize, however, that everything which takes place behind the curtain must be subject to the approval of the producer. He must be a complete autocrat and have the final word in any discussion. All the other members of the stage staff are technical advisors or executives, but it is essential that the authority of the producer should be paramount. Obviously, therefore, the producer must have some knowledge of every aspect of stagecraft.

Next to the producer, the most important man is the stage manager. This position is vitally important, and carries many varied duties. The stage manager is the producer's second in command, and a wise producer will do everything in his power to see that the authority of the stage

manager is maintained. The ideal stage manager is one of those people who get things done. He is able to control subordinates; he is dominating, tactful, and resourceful. He is ready to cope with any unforeseen emergency. He is methodical. In the amateur theatre, he is extremely rare.

The assistant stage manager, or as he is usually termed in this age of abbreviations, the A.S.M., is the next in order of seniority. He may be employed in any way that the stage manager requires, but normally it is his duty to hold the book, and prompt the performance. Either the stage manager, or his assistant, or both should be present at every rehearsal. In a difficult production, more than one A.S.M. may be necessary. In that case it is important that their duties should be clearly defined so as to avoid overlapping and contradictory orders, which have a demoralizing effect on subordinates.

Next is the electrician. The duty of the electrician, who may also have several assistants, is to arrange and control the stage lighting. It should not be difficult to find someone to take an interest in this most fascinating science. Your electrician should know, or be prepared to learn, how to handle electrical apparatus, how to wire lighting battens, lamps, bells, and any properties, or stage effect machines, which may require to be driven by electricity; the principles of colour mixing; the effect of coloured light on coloured fabric, and, in short, everything bearing on the use of light in a production. He must also be methodical and exact, for he must work to a lighting plot, making alterations to the lighting on exact cues, and must so mark his apparatus that the correct check is given whenever a circuit is dimmed, to prevent the amount of dimming varying from night to night.

If your group is accustomed to working in a particular theatre, your electrician must familiarize himself with its lighting equipment, and know the load that the various circuits will carry with safety. Obviously, the greater knowledge of electricity, both theoretical and practical, which your electrician has to start with, the better. If you can find one who is capable of fitting up

temporary and portable lighting sets, hold on to him, for he may prove to be the most valuable man in your society.

This does not pretend to be more than a sketchy indication of what is required of the stage electrician. Stage lighting, as I have already said, is a science in itself.

The work of the property master, or "Props," is often performed by the stage manager. This is a mistake. The stage manager has many people to supervise, and he cannot do this properly, particularly during a change of scene, if he has things to see to himself. "Props" should be made responsible in the first place for seeing that the necessary properties are brought to the theatre, and in the second that they reach their correct destination on the stage. It is by no means an easy job, and it is essential that you should choose for it someone who is both methodical and conscientious.

The wardrobe mistress should have some knowledge of period costume. If your society proposes to make its own costumes, she should take complete charge of this branch. But even if your costumes are hired, it is valuable to have a wardrobe mistress to check them and to see that the correct costumes are sent (to see, for instance, that the costumier has not made a palpable anachronism); to collect them from the cast and pack them for return at the end of the run. She should also take charge of minor repairs that may have to be executed from night to night. Societies that make their own costumes soon accumulate a considerable wardrobe, and it is essential that someone should be definitely in charge of this all the year round.

The main duty of the stage hands is to set and strike scenery and furniture. There is a mistaken idea abroad that scene shifting is an utterly unskilled job that anyone can perform. The result of this is that in nine productions out of ten, the scene shifting is left in the hands of anyone who cares to turn up. Actually the reverse is the case. Scene shifting does not call for particular skill, but it is, quite definitely, a job that must be learned. An average person can learn it quickly, which is all the more reason for training as many members of your society as possible to handle flats.

Haphazard scene shifting means periods of chaos behind the curtain during protracted in-

tervals. Light-hearted cries from the scene shifters, who are enjoying themselves, and deep throated oaths from the stage manager, who is not, frequently assail the ears of the audience. This may amuse them, but it does not increase their respect for amateur drama.

It is obvious that helpers who know neither what they are expected to do, nor how to do it, when it is explained to them, are almost worse than useless: and yet such helpers are the most common. It is curious how dense otherwise sensible people become when they turn their attention to moving furniture and scenery in the theatre. I have actually seen two apparently sane and normal individuals carry a heavy table through a doorway that was being moved across the stage! They evidently saw the doorway and made for it, without pausing to notice that there was nothing on either side of it, or that it was actually in motion!

Stage hands frequently, of course, have other jobs. One must always operate the curtain, and others will often be required to work effects and noises off. None of their duties is difficult to learn, but all of them do require to be learned.

Some knowledge of carpentry is required if you are to make your own scenery, but it is no more than is known by the average man who is "handy about the house." Similarly, knowledge of dress-making is necessary for those who are to make the costumes, but what club has not many women members who are handy with a needle?

Scene painting is rather a different matter. To become a skilled scenic artist certainly does require years of study and practice, but here the modern tendency towards simplicity is on the side of the amateur. While you may never be able to paint a backcloth that faithfully depicts an alpine scene, or Piccadilly Circus, you will almost certainly be able to find someone who will quickly learn sufficient about the art of scene painting to produce striking and efficient interiors, and simple and bold effects for exterior scenes. Fussy backcloths are no longer encouraged, and whatever our views are regarding the artistic advantage or disadvantage of the present fashion, there is no doubt that it is of great assistance to the amateur.

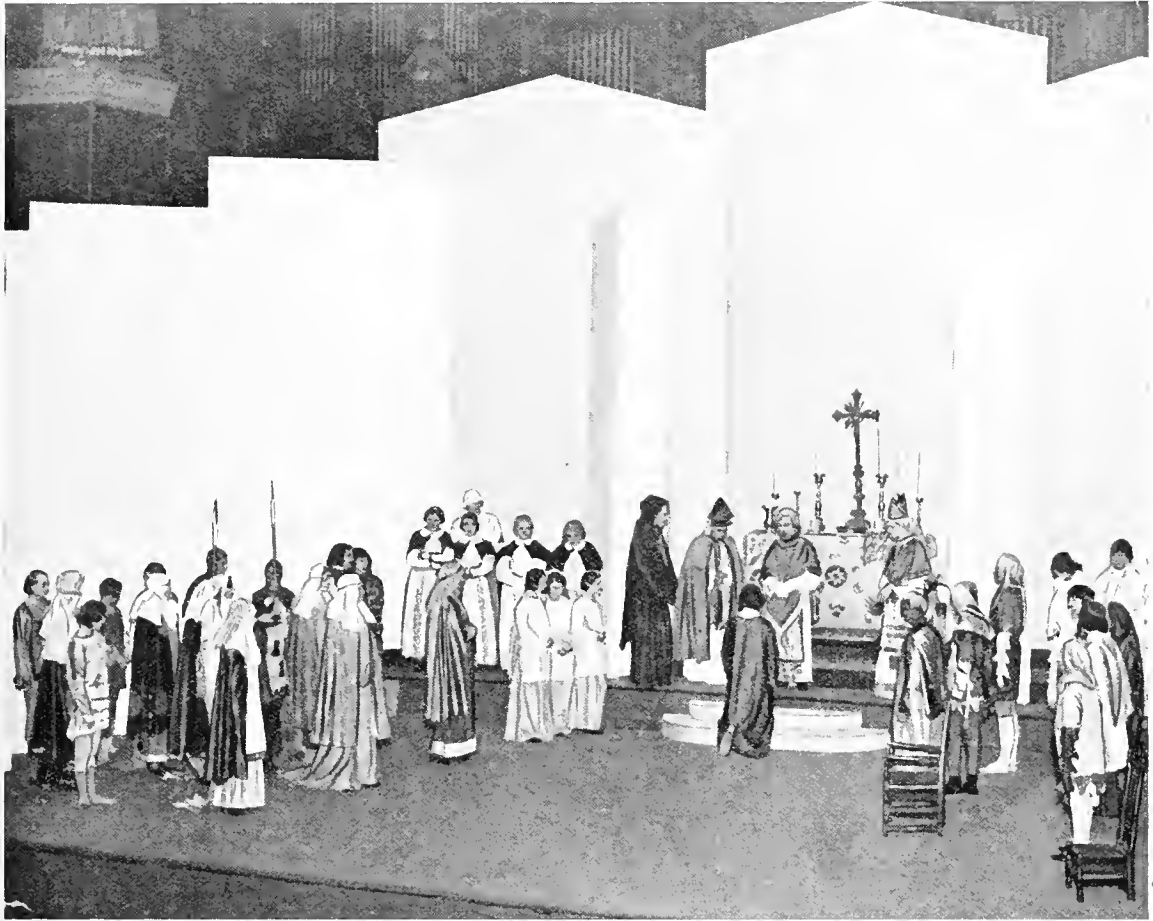
The designer must obviously have an eye for colour and design, and it is almost essential that he should be able to produce reasonably efficient



sketches and plans. If he is not able to do so he must collaborate with someone whose talents lie in this direction, and the originality of the one combined with the technical skill of the other should produce satisfactory results. This should not be beyond the resources of any society.

will result in a degree of finish and perfection that few amateur societies, at the moment, reach.

The first photograph is that of "A Masque of Glasgow." This is a type of performance in which the importance of the stage staff cannot be exaggerated. It was given not in a regular



THE CORONATION OF ROBERT THE BRUCE—A SCENE FROM "A MASQUE OF GLASGOW"

*Photo by courtesy of "The Bulletin," Glasgow; block by courtesy of "The Scottish Stage"*

And so, you see, there are many outlets for the activities of those who are interested in your work but who do not wish to act. The theatre is an all-embracing art, and it is worth while taking advantage of this, if only for the reason that the more people who take an active part in an amateur dramatic club, the larger its audience is likely to be. The employment of amateur specialists in all the various branches of stagecraft

theatre, but in St. Andrew's Hall, an old fashioned building with an open platform and an organ behind. The organ pipes can be seen behind the scenery, which, however, by the simplicity of its design—Miss Constance Herbert was the producer—overcame the disability of the background, which was further minimized by an intelligent use of lighting. This photograph serves to illustrate an economical design, useful

as a background against which many different scenes can be played, the correct atmosphere being obtained by the use of properties, as, for example, the altar in this scene, which is the Coronation of Robert the Bruce.

The second photograph, from the play *Once in a Lifetime*, a clever skit on Hollywood produced at the Queen's Theatre in 1933, shows a scene in which a film is being shot and the staff of the studio is at work. Those who feel that the number of auxiliaries necessary for the smooth production of a stage play is large may find some



"ONCE IN A LIFETIME"

Photo by Pollard Crowther

comfort in the knowledge that the film is even more exacting!

So far I have dealt only with those whose duties are concerned with the stage itself. There is, however, another band of workers on the other side of the curtain, and it is extremely important that they, too, should carry out their duties efficiently. I refer to the front of house staff.

First of all, there is the front of house manager. Like the stage manager his duty is supervision. He, too, must be a man of tact and resource, and know when to be firm and when to give way. He must take control in an emergency. Under him are all the various people required to look after the auditorium. First the ushers, whose duty it is to show the members of the audience to their seats. They must know how the theatre is seated. They must know whether the letter on the back of an end seat refers to the row in front or the row behind. They must know the

approximate number of seats in each row, and from which end the numbering starts, so as to be able to show latecomers to their seats with the least possible annoyance to those who have arrived in time. They must know *all* the exits from the theatre and direct the audience to them at the end of the performance. "The man in the street," for some unexplained reason, always prefers to get there by the same door through which he left it! Although there may be ten exits from a theatre, probably only two of these are ever used to any extent. The ushers should do their best to overcome this desire of the audience to press through one door.

The programme and chocolate sellers must remember that they have definite duties to perform beyond standing in the gangways. To have attractive programme sellers, if they are also competent, is sound business. Those who sell chocolates and sweets must know the prices of the various boxes, and what they contain, and anybody who sells anything *must* have change. It is the duty of the front of house manager to see that change is provided for all who require it. It is wise, if chocolates are being sold, for the manager to appoint a deputy to look after the sellers both of these and of the programmes. It is a great advantage to have someone definitely in charge to tell the sellers to which part of the house they are to go and to instruct them in their duties if necessary. The most efficient sellers should sell chocolates, as these are obviously more difficult to dispose of than programmes. The manager has usually too much to do to attend to this himself.

It is of the utmost importance that *every* member of the front of house staff should be in the building at least ten minutes before the doors are due to open.

If all the positions I have mentioned, on both sides of the curtain, are filled, the ranks of the members of your society will probably be considerably swelled. It may take time and a good deal of persuasion to reach the point when all the various jobs are done regularly by the same people at each performance, but if you can reach it the benefit will be a double one. The performances themselves will be more efficient and the increased number of those taking an active interest—however small—will almost certainly result in a larger regular audience.

## ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES

By F. E. DORAN

*Secretary, Manchester Playgoers Club*

**M**OST people have the vaguest and extraordinary ideas of how a play is produced, and not the least vague or extraordinary ideas are among many so-called producers themselves. There seems to be a notion, or rather absence of a notion, that a play, like Topsy, just grows. But the producer has to encourage and direct the growth. He is like a dramatic gardener, trimming here, pruning there, and twisting this dialogue into such and such an effect. A little thought will recall that the theatre is no new thing. Our records go back to the Greeks, and some learned men will trace out a drama of sorts in aboriginal dances. Now it is reasonable to visualize that an art with over 2,000 years' history must have established certain principles. Everything worth while is based on principle. Mathematics, architecture, painting, engineering, cooking, all these and others have laws that must be obeyed. In architecture a beam must not be heavier than its supporting piers can stand. In painting certain lights produce certain colours. In engineering certain forces produce certain results, and so it is with the theatre.

It is no use trying to learn arithmetic from the middle of the book. The multiplication table and the four signs must come first. Their equivalent exists in the theatre and they cannot be avoided. It matters not what the play is, where it is, or why it is being performed, there are certain elementary principles that must be applied in every case. No matter what sort of play, wise or stupid, simple or lavish, comedy, farce, mystery, poetic, or prose, all is dust and ashes, wasted time and futile effort unless the following principle is tested—"Can every person in the audience, no matter where they are seated, see and hear every word." The enunciation of this principle may seem superfluous. "Of course" (I feel my readers saying), "Of course, the audience must see and hear." In twelve years' intensive criticism of amateur productions I have seen this fundamental principle either ignored or overlooked. It is because this principle is so obvious that it is for-

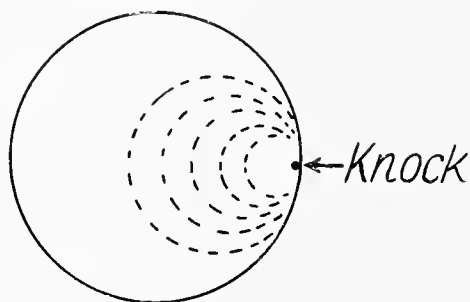
gotten in the mass of detail that rises from it and the performance of more picturesque details connected with a production.

The rehearsals of amateur, and sometimes professional, plays too, usually take place in a hired room of small dimensions. If the group is happily placed or moderately well off then it rehearses in a hall, perhaps the very hall in which the performance will take place. Lucky people these! But even here, as in the small room, the producer is in close proximity to the players, use of the script makes him familiar with the words, and the wish not to strain unduly the vocal capacity of his cast, all lead to a conversational rehearsal, and these conversational tones have a nasty tendency to creep into the textual interpretation of the play and when the time comes to enlarge the compass of the voices, the balance of the play is disturbed, if not destroyed, and even if the principle of being seen and heard is fully operated, it has not been properly applied, and so artistic damage of the first degree has been done.

The producer must therefore always bear in mind that rehearsals, particularly the early ones, are sketches to scale, as it were. An action or vocal pitch that is adequate in a small room, or when near the performer, can only be taken as indicative of the enlargement that should be seen when the play is in full fling, and not as the final thing. Should the important State paper be taken with the right hand or the left, or the poison put on the shelf on stage right or left, should that or the other entrance be made R., L., or C., are the dead wood points on which small scale acting can be helpful. Trial and error, a process of elimination, can be employed with small scale methods and sometimes significant detail discovered without strain, but it is advisable that when once the more or less accurate details are filled then full scale rehearsals should be adopted and the cast rehearsed in full glory of a complete range of vocal exercise. The producer should make sure, by personal and direct observation that every part of the hall is reached by the actor's voice, and that

furniture, props, and other actors are in relevant positions, so that the view of the audience is not obstructed in any way.

Now this audibility principle brings up the matter of vocal education. Voice production does not apparently come naturally to us. No doubt it ought to, but when producing plays I have had hardly one person in six who had full vocal control. It is mainly a matter of breathing and the use of the diaphragm—a muscle that runs under the lungs and across the body. For stage and platform speaking, the lungs must be fully employed and used. Deep breathing and rhythmic respiration are essentials, and a producer is well advised to



have a sound knowledge of voice production; not too much, as there are specialists who can more adequately deal with recalcitrant cases. The failing of amateurs is throat speaking—speaking from the throat instead of from the deep chest. It is really a matter of mechanism and the application of simple rules. For instance, the bugle blast can be heard for a great distance, much farther than its ludicrous cousin the big trombone, because, though both have an approximate equivalent of wind in the throttle, yet the dissemination is different. In the case of throat speakers, they may shout and rant, but because they have no force or power behind each syllable, the words fail to overcome the resistance of the air.

The air is an invisible cushion. Let us imagine it as a gasometer full of water. If you knock on the side of the gasometer you will set up a wave travelling outwards but getting feebler and feebler as it gets away from the knock. Every word spoken is a knock on the atmosphere. Air waves in decreasing volume carry the sound so far, and when the wave strikes on the ear drum of

the auditor, natural processes turn the air wave into sound and sound is transformed to speech.

But the sound must get to the auditor, and if the wave impulse is started up in the throat then it has no punch behind it, and not only will it fail to carry, but the range of control is limited. Our old friend the “stage whisper” is a good example that will suffice for all. A stage whisper is really a whisper—not a simulated one, but its soft tones have behind them the full force of the speaker’s expelled lung power, not just a wee bit of vapour from the back of the throat. It may be soft and low, but it has *projection*, and the proper projection of the human voice is essential to proper production.

When the knack of voice control has been mastered, parts can be spoken without fatigue, a whole range of emotional power is added to the producer’s armoury, and the full power of poetic



imagery and the magic of the spoken voice is at his command. The talkie machine may improve itself to the perfect similitude of direct speech, but it will never supersede that wonderful contact, spiritual and mental, which is set up when a good voice is properly used in our presence. Practice, practice, and continual practice is a necessity. Once learnt, good speaking will never be forgotten, and will be an asset of great value. But it must be learnt. Like skating on ice, it is not so simple as it sounds. But, again like ice skating, it is hard to forget, and practice makes perfect.

I would always advocate poetry, particularly Milton and Shakespeare, as an exercise for all adolescents. With good breathing and timing of sentences it leads to voice control, mental and bodily poise, and physical health. The Bible, Carlyle, Macaulay’s *Essays* and famous speeches such as Warren Hastings’ and so on, are all good material on which to practise.

The next part of the principle is “seeing.” This can be divided in two parts, active seeing and passive seeing, i.e. seeing *action* or essential movement, and then such passive parts of the whole as

the throne, or a safe, or desk, or some such prop used in the development of the story. For the immediate purpose I deal with the producer controlling the actions of the actor.

Gesture is almost as important as the voice and in some instances can be more eloquent than the most poetic passages. It is a powerful reinforcement to the capabilities of the voice, and a study of graceful movements and bodily poise is essential to successful and artistic results. It is no part of a producer's function to instruct an actor in the elements of either voice production or bodily movement. The actor should provide that technical equipment himself, but assuming knowledge in the actor of first principles, the producer must be able to apply, and to apply consciously, those principles to bringing out the third principle—the author's intention.

I have no wish to be pedantic in the German fashion and anatomize the great art of acting into so many little bits or to choke the reader's mind with meticulous formulae that will but terrify and hamper, but when a producer has a job in hand he must know (*a*) what to look for from the actor, and (*b*) what to contribute to the actor. He must know, and consciously know, where to put his finger on a weak spot, and he cannot know this until he knows where the strong spots are. So I must do a little more analytical work for the beginner to become *aware* of the task before him and not be blindfolded when performing one of the most important tasks in the theatre.

So to consideration of bodily movement for the audience to SEE. Bodily movement should be free, lissom, easy. The actor should project assurance over the footlights. His walk must be certain and sure. I want our embryo producer to appreciate that an ungainly person in the cast, as one without bodily control, general or particular, is like an odd piece in a jig-saw puzzle; it might fit but does not harmonize. So the producer must insist on players learning control of body as well as of voice.

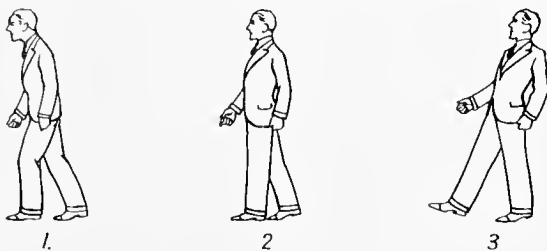
The joints of the shoulders, elbows, wrists, knuckles, hips, knees, and ankles, are each separate elements, and can be brought into particular service. Whoever has seen either of the Misses Vanbrugh will appreciate this point, for these artists make their very finger nails eloquent, and the mere crooking of the little finger bring

about the downfall of an Empire. Certainly absence of acting of this quality has brought about the downfall of one sort of Empire, and its magnification on the screen the development of the other Empire.

Most amateurs appear to have no use for the



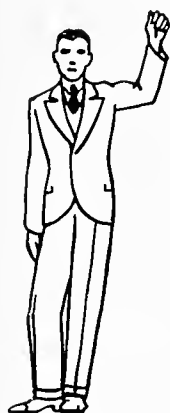
arm above the elbow. The upper arm is irrevocably glued to the ribs. Consequently when a gesture of domination has to be made it is as though the actor is partially paralysed. Spaciousness of movement is hard to develop in this age of restraint. We are trained not to show off, not to be assertive, but unfortunately the actor must be assertive, he must take his part, and what is probably blatant in the drawing-room is unobservable on the stage. If an action is done *au naturel* the audience has been robbed because they have not had an opportunity to see what they have paid to see. Do not be afraid of dumb-bell exercise or Indian club swinging. Get the



muscles of arm and leg free, the joints as it were, well oiled. Study pictures and statues. Note how to fold the fingers for various purposes.

When walking be definite. Place the feet firmly. Do not allow a player to slouch (1) or walk like a ram-rod (2) or let his legs come before his head (3). The legs can speak as well as the tongue. Those who saw Sir Henry Irving in *The Lyons Mail* will remember how the soles of

his feet used to tell the story of the innocent man's execution. Irving was on the roof of a shed, with his feet to the audience. They did all the acting.



Graceful leg position can be learnt by studying fencing poses. "One leg straight, the other slightly bent, and arm by the side," was an old instruction, and a very good foundation as a basic position from which to start.

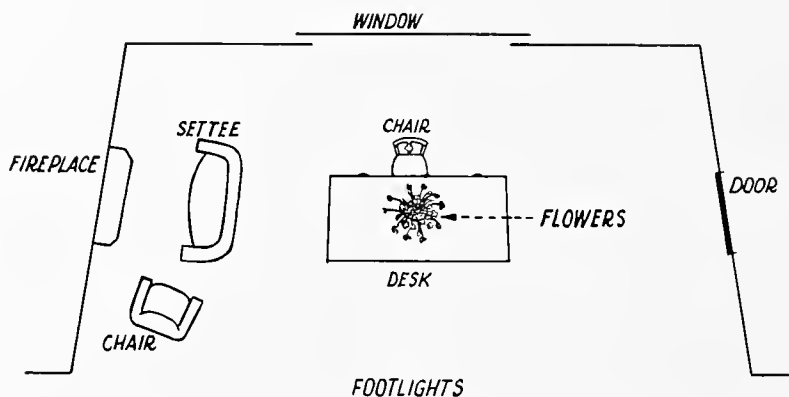
Stooping shoulders are no good to anybody. A head thrust forward is a bad unit to work with. Beware of the actor who flops his hands from the wrists, or slouches from the knees. It is this knowing what not to do that is as important as knowing what to do. How often do we see the stage set in such a manner that important action

claim good company, I maintain it is bad practice whoever does it.

How often do we see something like the illustration given below in which the vase of flowers must obscure the face of anybody sitting in the chair at the desk? Or, worse still, the armchair completely masks all that goes on on the settee, from one side, and the desk and back of the settee masks all from the other. So that all we get is some disembodied voices rising from the depths of the upholstery.

There must be no compromise with these principles of seeing or hearing. They are the kernel, the very quintessence of the game. All scenery must be subordinated to it. Positions are arranged to suit it. Crossing worked out in accordance with them, and all this and much more are made so much easier and comprehensible when the producer knows *why* such and such a thing is done.

Now all this may appear as A-B-C. Without *knowledge* of this elementary stuff no producer



is hidden by the furniture, or a character's facial expression lost because it is presented in a place masked by a faulty light or something more tangible. This is often seen in professional productions, so while the amateur producer may

will get far. Once he has studied and assimilated it, he can forget it, but he will always know what *not* to do. It is no fun to me to write this very basic stuff, but it is the foundation on which I am going to build—Seeing, Hearing, and Why.

# THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT

By ALFRED HARTOP

*Perruquier and Lecturer to Amateur Societies*

*"The actors are at hand and by their shore,  
You shall know all that you are like to know."*

SOME amateur theatrical societies consider it essential to engage the services of an experienced perruquier to make up the whole cast of a production, thus relieving the producer, stage manager, and the players of all anxiety likely to arise in that direction. It cannot be denied that this is the best procedure when the excellence of a production is the chief end in view and when expense is of secondary account. Expert make-up ensures that the whole cast is "balanced"; that is, each individual of the cast will look a part of a general scheme rather than be outstanding because of some incongruity of style or colour. Further, the "character" parts will have the characteristics that are a necessary complement to costume and histrionic ability.

Other societies insist that members, like their professional prototypes, shall provide their own make-up requisites and know how to ply them. Where this rule obtains it is usual to find a deplorable lack of uniformity due to the varying ability of a "cast" to make-up themselves. Many instances have come to my notice where persons making their initial appearance have had no notion whatever of the use of make-up and received help from others whose only notion was to "put a bit of colour on" and let it go at that. Such crude attempts are bound to minimize the effect of appropriate costume and otherwise commendable effort. Real indifference, I believe, is rare. Fortunately, there is a large percentage of amateurs with sufficient powers of observation and imagination to realize the possibilities of the art of make-up, who take a pride in getting the best possible results by their own effort, and to whom make-up is a fascinating and intriguing study.

Instruction, or what I am apt to term my "gospel" of make-up to amateurs, has been mainly addressed to such through the medium of lectures to Drama Circles, Green Room Clubs, and members of a "cast" who have met together for tuition in their respective needs. In this way,

the common and remote difficulties have been anticipated and by easy steps, from simple "straight" to the more complex "character" types, the rudiments of this interesting art have been inculcated to the desired end of a standard in make-up comparable in achievement to other theatrical arts. As in other branches of dramatic art, proficiency can only be acquired by frequent attempts to carry out some form of instruction that will repay in every way the time devoted to a thorough interpretation. It is what you can do rather than what you know that counts, and these attempts need not be irksome, but, on the contrary, a source of pleasure; and they can be made so, especially when tried out in co-operation with other players.

Perhaps the idea of a Make-up Circle is new and one that appeals. If so, why not start one in connexion with the society? There would be no expert's fee for tuition, THEATRE AND STAGE provides all the guidance required; while paints, powder, etc., may be more or less "communal." Evenings spent in this way would be entertaining and instructive, and, furthermore, experience would be quickly gained and facility and speed developed; while the sensitivity to make-up, experienced by many, would soon disappear.

We are now approaching a point where I shall give details of a simple "straight" make-up for trial, but before doing so we must consider the needs of beginners who will not possess grease paints and other requisites; therefore, a preliminary selection, sufficient for general practice, will be made from the Descriptive List, already given. Other shades will be added as required, though from the few selected, foundations for many types are possible when they are used in different combinations.

Women will require grease paints—

STICKS: No's. 1½, 2½, 5, 9, Chrome, and Carmine 2.

**LINERS:** Lake, Mid Blue, Dark Brown, and White.

Also a box of Water-cosmetic, dark brown (this is for the eye lashes and eyebrows, but should not be of the indelible or water resisting variety); a box of dry Rouge de Theatre of a dull medium Carmine. A medium red lip pencil may be added, but it is not essential.

Men will require a rather different range—

**STICKS:** No's. 2½, 3 or 3½, 5, 7, 9, Chrome, Carmine 3, and White.

**LINERS:** Lake, Medium or Dark Grey, and Dark Brown.

A box of brown Mascaro or heating cosmetic, for the hair.

**COLD CREAM**, of course, will be needed by all. Before grease paint is applied the face should be thoroughly massaged with cold cream so that the pores are well filled. This preparatory process prevents the pores from becoming clogged with colour, provides a lubricating surface for the even spreading of grease paint, and assists in a clean removal of the make-up. There is a variety from which to choose. Further, other kinds of grease may be substituted for cold cream—cocoa-butter, vaseline, etc. The variety known as Theatrical Cold Cream is probably the best, as it can be used both before the application of make-up and also for its removal. Cocoa-butter is popular, and can be obtained in blocks specially prepared for this purpose; many women object to its use, believing that it will cause the growth of hair on the face. They have similar views about vaseline and olive oil. For efficient removal, however, grease of a more solvent kind is desirable, and while any one of those mentioned may be used, preparations known as "Grease-paint Remover" will be found best for quick and thorough cleansing.

**FACE POWDER** is applied over grease paint to absorb the grease and to fix the make-up so that it neither smears nor runs; also, powder kills the greasy appearance and attains the semblance of natural flesh. For ordinary purposes of facial make-up the heavily coloured powders are not recommended. The best is undoubtedly that known as "Blending Powder." Being as near transparent as possible and of a neutral shade, it

can be applied over any but the darkest make-up without fear of destroying the effect of high lighting and lining. A cheap and efficient substitute is found in ordinary Violet Powder, which is a good absorbent and fairly transparent. Therefore, for our purpose a box of Violet Powder and a small box of Natural and Rachel, for blending with the Violet Powder, will be found best.

**WOOL PUFFS** will be required—one of about four or five inches for applying the powder, and a smaller one for applying the rouge. A baby brush or hare's foot is used for brushing off superfluous powder. Two or three orange sticks four and a half inches long are needed for applying dots or lines where required; the extra length prevents obstruction by the hand of the view in the mirror.

Do not omit to get a chamois stump, with a point at each end. These stumps, which have soft and perfectly harmless points, are particularly useful for working about the eyes. The taper style of "pipe cleaners" is handy and can be used for a variety of purposes.

A make-up box will, of course, be necessary. Enamelled tin boxes of various designs, with a mirror in the lid, are obtainable. A satisfactory receptacle, which will readily slip into a larger case, can be made from a cheap small attaché case.

It should be the personal concern of every possessor of a make-up box to keep its contents scrupulously clean, for hygienic reasons, as any irritation or after effects of use are apt to be blamed on the paints, whereas the probable cause is entirely under the user's control. Therefore, make it a rule to use the best materials and to take intelligent care of them. Observance of it will prove to be the best guarantee against any form of detrimental effect.

### *Applying a "Straight" Make-up for Women*

The term "Straight" is used to indicate the application of colour in sufficient quantities to counteract the effect of stage lights and to emphasize the features so that they may be seen from any position in the audience.

In some circumstances a simple application will meet the case, as when the lighting is not strong and the audience is near to the performers; when the production is out-of-doors; when presence on the stage is brief and in the background. A simple make-up in such cases consists of an application



of cold cream, a good powdering with a flesh coloured powder, the eyebrows darkened a shade, and the whole toned up with a few touches of dry rouge. In all other cases approximating stage conditions a foundation grease paint should be applied to secure lasting results: an even tone for the complexion, the covering of blemishes, the

make-up is completed is apt to be annoying. If you find you are sensitive to powder and liable to sneeze, a small wad of cotton-wool pressed into the nostrils will keep the powder out. Now, apply cold cream fairly liberally all over the face and neck, then gently massage it into the skin so that the pores are well filled. This is done with



FIG. 2. APPLYING THE FOUNDATION

(Posed by Miss Bessie Platt, Bradford A.O.D.S.)



FIG. 3. APPLYING THE ROUGE

lightening in tone of a dark skin or the deepening of a too fair one, the correction of features by highlights and shading.

We will now give careful consideration to the actual application.

**APPLYING THE FOUNDATION.** Firstly, the hair should be drawn away from the face and protected from the paint and powder by a net or a band of ribbon tied around the head; also, an overall or cotton dressing gown should be worn to protect the clothing. It is a wise rule to clear the nose before applying anything to the face as the need to use a handkerchief just when the

the tips of the fingers or with the aid of a small rubber complexion brush. Give every part, not omitting the eyelids, a fair share of cream, but avoid working it into the hair. This accomplished, wipe off the superfluous cream with towel or soft cloth. Use judgment here as some skins are of a dryer nature than others. In any case, do not leave the face too greasy.

You can now apply the foundation flesh colour, No.  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , if your colour type is medium; No.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  with a tenth of No.  $1\frac{1}{2}$  added if you incline to blonde; No.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  with a tenth of chrome added if brunette. Make a few streaks across the forehead,

one down each side of the nose, a few on each cheek, a sweeping one round the chin, and a few touches under the chin. Begin your new stick of paint by using one side of the tip only. This method will quickly wear the tip to a wedge-like point. This makes the stick less liable to break, the covering area is increased, and the point edge is an excellent aid in lining. The paint should now be smoothed out, with the finger tips, until the face is evenly covered with colour. Again, let me remind you not to work the paint

which is below the outer corner of the eye, gradually fading up to the temple, down on to the cheek, well up to the eye, and in to the inner corner of the eye. Keep the colour at its fullest on the cheek-bone and smooth out at all extremes so that there is no obvious joining with the foundation.

Differently shaped faces demand consideration of their special needs; therefore, varying placement should be tried until the best way is discovered. Illustratively, should the face be narrow,



FIG. 4

into the hair, but gently to smooth it upward so that the colour fades away just when reaching the hair. Similarly with the chin, smooth the paint downwards until the colour fades away without showing where it ends. Be sure that the hollows of the eyes are covered; that the paint is carried right up to the lashes of the lower eye-lid—put a good foundation there; that the ears and the space behind the ears and the neck have all had their share. Here, again, judgment must be brought to bear. The foundation paint should not be applied too heavily, but only as is economically necessary to cover the skin thoroughly and uniformly.

**APPLYING THE ROUGE.** Next comes the application of rouge, Carmine 2, to tone up the complexion. This must be done with painstaking care. Rouge is a sign-post that attracts the eye of an audience to the part of a face where it is placed, and plays a big part, not only in bringing out the best in your face, but also in improving its contour. Normally it is made to follow the curve of the cheek-bone—in a crescent, the centre of

it can be made to look wider by putting full colour on the outer side of the cheek and running it out to the middle of the face, making it appear wide because the eye is drawn to the brilliance of the sides. On the other hand, if the face is round, broad, or with large cheek and jaw-bones, the reverse treatment is effective—put the rouge inward near the nose and smooth outward so that the fading occurs on the parts that require to be subdued. These tricks can be modified to meet particular needs. Whichever is adopted, avoid the hectic, overdone result, and above all see that the two sides match. When applying, do not get too much on at first; simply make a few light dots in the area, blend, and smooth out with the fingertips, and add if necessary by touching the fingers on the stick and hence to the face. If you have a dark complexion use Carmine 2 shade with the addition of a touch of Lake and of Chrome.

So far nothing has been done to emphasize the features, or reproduce the natural light and shade that stage lighting destroys. This special aspect of the make-up will next have consideration.

## DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS

By C. HAROLD RIDGE, A.R.S.M., D.I.C., AND F. S. ALDRED, A.M. INST. C.E.

*Consulting Engineers*

**A**LTHOUGH the system of distribution employed by the electricity supply company whose current is to be used does not materially interest a small consumer, it becomes a question of importance in the case of a theatre where the demand is often extremely large. On this account the design of the lighting installation, especially that of the stage, is controlled to some extent by the system of supply.

The most simple systems are those of the D.C. two wire and A.C. single phase, when the supply company bring a pair of mains into the building, and the lamps are in effect connected across them. Any electric motors, which may be used, would also be connected in the same manner, being made for the same voltage as the lamps, which would be that of the mains.

If the supply is Direct Current, the system is more likely to be that known as the Three-Wire System, as its use by the company results in a great saving in the size and cost of the mains required to transmit a given power.

In this case three mains are brought into the building, two of them called "outers," the third being the "middle" or "neutral" wire, which generally has a copper cross section half that of either of the outers.

Fig. 4 gives a diagrammatic arrangement of the wiring and gear in the "intake."

It will be seen that the middle wire is "split" and that with the respective outers it forms two simple two wire circuits, across which 200 volt lamps are connected, whilst an electric motor is connected directly across the outers operating at 400 volts, thus reducing the size of the copper mains required for a given power, as it has already been shown that power is the product of volts and amperes; therefore by doubling the voltage, the current is halved.

If an equal number of lamps are connected on each "side" of the system, the current will flow outwards along the + lead, through the lamps, to the "splitting" point on the "middle," then through the second set of lamps on the other

"side" and back along the - lead, no current flowing back to the dynamo along the middle wire.

If the two sides are unequally loaded, the middle wire would carry the difference to or from the dynamos in the generating station, as the case might be. To avoid an excessive current in this wire, the companies frequently impose limits to the extent of the out of balance load, and the lighting circuits must be arranged with this point in view.

A stage switchboard to operate on this system is practically a double board, and circuits fed from opposite sides must not be within six feet of each other to prevent a person inadvertently touching the outers and obtaining an electrical shock, which at 400 volts may be fatal. Admittedly there are 400 volts both at the switchboard and at an electric motor, but as both these pieces of apparatus should be touched only by an experienced person after taking due precaution, the risk of shock should be negligible.

In the diagram a link is shown on the middle wire instead of a cut-out or fuse because this wire should never be broken when the system is under load, until it has been divided to form two separate circuits, having fuses on both poles; otherwise it is possible for the full voltage, in this case 400 volts, to be applied to the lamps on one side with consequent damage.

The middle wire is often connected to earth at the generating station, either direct or through a limiting resistance.

For Direct Current distribution the Three-Wire System is almost universal, and it is sometimes used for single-phase alternating supply.

The only other system to be investigated for the purposes of this subject is that used to transmit Three-Phase Alternating Current, which is rapidly superseding all other forms.

There is apt to be confusion between a Three-Wire and a Three-Phase System, but the former is merely a method of distribution, whilst the latter is a system of generating electric current, in which one generator produces three distinct

currents, each generated in a separate winding and having its own electro-motive force.

There are certain relationships between these currents that need not be entered into here.

Three-Phase current is distributed for lighting and power purposes by means of four wires, one from each phase, whilst the fourth wire is the "neutral," which acts for the Three-Phase System in much the same manner as the middle wire does in a Three-Wire System.

The lamps are connected between the phase lines and the neutral, the potential difference between them being now standardized at 230 volts, whilst the voltage between the phase lines is 400, and this higher voltage is available for motors with a consequent reduction in the size of the mains.

Fig. 5 gives a diagrammatic arrangement of a Three-Phase Four-Wire Circuit, from which it is seen that there are three separate circuits for the lamps, and these must be kept apart in the building, as in the previous system, especially in such apparatus as battens and footlights, the lamps of each being connected to one phase only.

Stage switchboards operating on this system need to be carefully planned and will be described in the chapter on switchboards.

### WIRING

The following remarks are not intended to teach the uninitiated how to do the wiring himself; this should be carried out by a person experienced in this work, especially so since voltages now in use are sufficiently high to cause danger to life and damage to property if the work is not well done. If possible, it is advisable for it to be carried out by those having experience in theatre installations and knowledge of the special rules and regulations pertaining to such places. It is hoped, however, that the remarks may be of assistance in the preparation of a wiring specification.

The work should be carried out in compliance with the *Regulation for the Electrical Equipment of Buildings*, Latest Edition, copies of which may be obtained from the Publishers, Messrs. E. & F. N. Spon, Ltd., 57, Haymarket, London, S.W.1, also with the *Regulations and Rules for Electrical Installations in Places of Public Entertainment*, published by the London County

Council and obtainable through any bookseller at the price of 6d. Some supply companies also issue rules with which installations to be fed from their mains must comply, and the insurance company concerned may have its own requirements, which it is advisable to know about before a contract is placed or work started, otherwise undue expenditure may be incurred in alterations.

The word "Regulations" is to some people like the proverbial "red rag to a bull," and although some regulations appear to be foolish at first sight, it will be found that experience has proved their value and that they are designed to secure safety in the use of electricity.

Stage wiring, which is invariably fixed to the wall surface and not buried in plaster, should be in steel conduit, preferably heavy gauge, screwed, welded, with suitable draw-in and inspection boxes throughout the system. A slight saving in cost is possible by the use of "grip-continuity" tubing, but this does not form such a permanent connexion as the former, in which the lengths of conduit and conduit fittings are screwed together, thus providing a continuous metallic protective system, which must be "earthed" in accordance with the Regulations.

From all mechanical and electrical points of view the value of the heavy gauge screwed welded conduit outweighs its slightly higher cost.

The conduit should be erected before the cables are drawn in, and the number of conductors for each size of conduit should not exceed that stated in the *Regulations*. Distribution boards and main switches and fuses should be in iron cases with conduits properly secured to them terminating in brass bushes. Conduit boxes should be used at lighting and switch points. Tumbler switches should be of the "Quick Make" and "Quick Break" pattern, preferably with "earthed dollies," especially in damp situations. Switches, like ceiling roses and lamp-holders, vary appreciably in price, but it is an economy to use those that are made by a firm of repute.

Cables should be C.M.A., 600 Megohm Grade, made by a member of the Cable Makers' Association, the current carrying capacity of the various sizes being that given in Table IV contained in the *Regulations for the Electrical Equipment of Buildings*. No joints should be

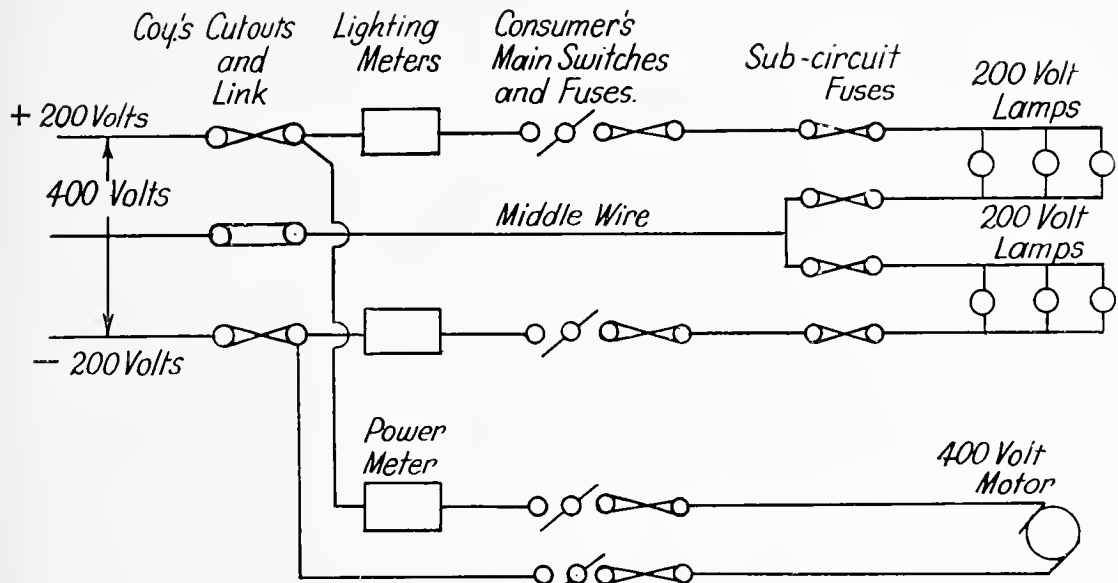


FIG. 4

DIAGRAMMATIC ARRANGEMENT OF INSTALLATION ON A THREE-WIRE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

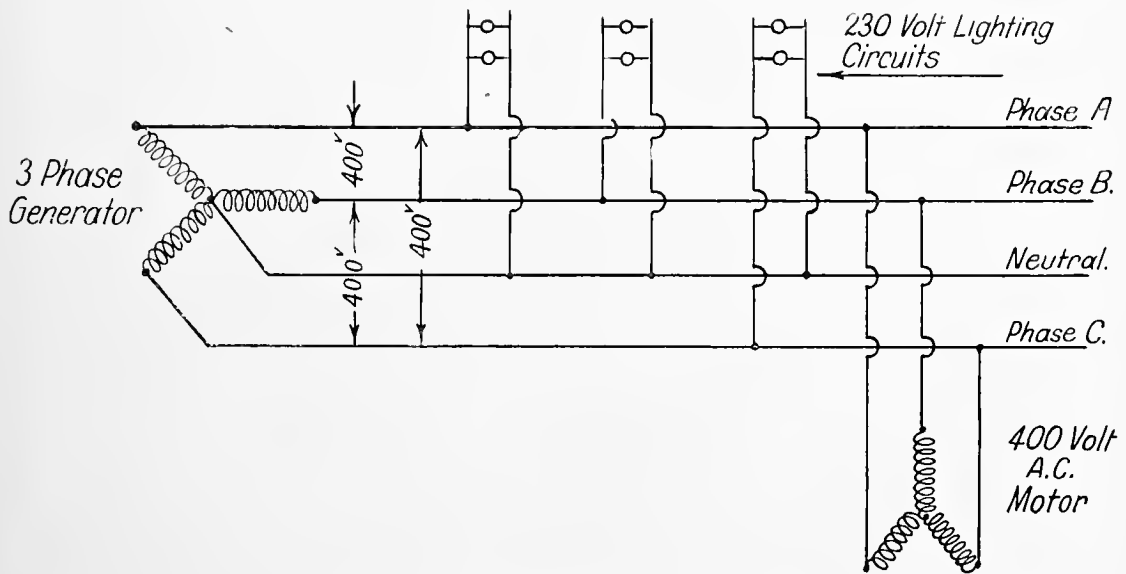


FIG. 5

DIAGRAM OF THREE-PHASE FOUR-WIRE SYSTEM

allowed in the cables, the looping system only being employed.

In preparing the ends of cables for connecting to terminals, etc., care should be taken that the outer coverings of tape and braid are cut back at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. from the end of the rubber insulation, making sure that they cannot get into contact with live metal, otherwise they may provide leakage paths for the current and result in poor readings when the insulation resistance tests are taken.

On the completion of an installation the supply company will make tests for their own purposes before making connexion to their mains. Licensing Authorities frequently require in writing the results of tests, particulars of which are given in the *Regulations*.

A stage wiring installation complete with switchboard can be considered satisfactory if it gives an insulation resistance of not less than 0.25 megohm (250,000 ohms).

#### SECONDARY LIGHTING

Attention must be drawn to the requirement by many Licensing Authorities of two independent systems of lighting in places of public entertainment. As the actual requirements vary in different districts, the local by-laws on the subject should be ascertained.

In some places it is sufficient if the exit notices only are illuminated by the two systems, whilst in others all portions of the premises to which the public have access must be provided with the two independent systems of lighting.

The London Regulations regarding exit notices are that they shall be illuminated by a light on each system, those in the auditorium being of such a design that they can be internally illuminated by a light on at least one of the systems, the other light being arranged outside, also that the lighting to exit notices shall not in any circumstances be extinguished or dimmed while the public are on the premises.

In West End Theatres it has been possible to arrange electric supplies from two independent sources, whereas the provincial practice has been for the main lighting to be electrical, and the secondary (sometimes called police lights) gas. However, with the exception of an area supplied by a certain London supply company, where

special arrangements are in force to give a dual supply, the unification of London electricity supply under the grid scheme has rendered the two independent sources of supply impossible, and the difficulty has been met in many cases by installing a battery of accumulators connected across the mains in such a manner that it will come into action in the event of an interruption of the main supply, and supply current to the exit notices, and to sufficient lighting points in the public parts of the building, such as stairways, passages, circulating areas, etc., to give the audience safe exit.

There are now on the market various ingenious automatic emergency electric lighting systems involving the use of batteries. They are being increasingly used in hospitals, hotels, and in theatres where the local authority sanction the use of a "cut-in" switch to bring the battery into action. Where the Authority does not allow such a switch, the battery can be arranged to "float" across the mains from a motor generator set, which would normally supply the secondary lighting. Should the main supply fail, and the motor generator stop running, circuit breakers fitted with reverse trips in circuit between the generator and battery open, and the battery takes the load.

Experience has shown that a secondary lighting load of between two and three k.w. is quite sufficient to give the emergency lighting required by the London County Council at the average West End Theatre.

The battery should be capable of maintaining the secondary lighting for not less than three hours.

The lighting arrangements in the auditorium of a modern theatre are rather elaborate. The main decorative lighting, called the primary, is fed and controlled from the stage switchboard; then there are a number of lighting points known as the Primary Maintained capable of giving general subdued illumination, but, if necessary, these can be switched off at control positions in the auditorium during stage action. Lastly there is the secondary lighting to which reference has already been made.

In certain large theatres, arrangements are made so that in the event of fire or panic the whole of the auditorium lighting can be brought on by any attendant.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHORUS

By D. GRAHAM DAVIS

Editor of "The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal"

IN Gilbert and Sullivan opera the chorus is as important to the general scheme as are the principals. Indeed, it frequently happens that it is of greater consequence. Quite apart from the many purely choral numbers, there are several scenes where the chorus work, both vocal and histrionic, is paramount, and of far more importance than that of the principals. Such scenes include the first act finale to *The Yeomen of the Guard*, the opening of each act of *The Gondoliers*, and the second act finale in *Princess Ida*.

A musical comedy chorus, especially since the methods of Broadway have been introduced to the British stage, is an alert, lively, and homogeneous body. Precise concerted action and movement help to make a broad picture of some fifty or a hundred people actuated as though by one brain. In older musical works, the chorus had little to do with the action of the piece; it was brought on to the stage, frequently for no rhyme or reason connected with the unfolding of the plot, sang its allotted music or performed some mechanical movements, and disappeared the same way as it arrived. Even to-day such use of the chorus can be seen in some operatic productions to which modern methods of stage craft have not been applied.

To Gilbert the chorus was something more than a mechanical musical strengthening. He made it his chief asset, as it became Sullivan's principal glory. Each chorister was individually as much a part of the opera as was the leading principal. Collectively as much care was lavished on the chorus as on the effects obtained by the leading principals. The choristers, in the right place, share the limelight with the more exalted actors. The principal, too, gains much of the effect of his part from the support given him by the chorus—and from the support he, in his turn, gives to the humbler members of the company. Absolute sympathy and camaraderie, therefore, are the first essentials between chorister and principal. And, strange as it may seem, this atmosphere of friendly interest and co-operation is far more

marked in the professional companies than, as one would expect, in many amateur societies.

The Gilbert and Sullivan chorus, unlike the musical comedy, grand opera, or revue chorus, is not a mechanical contrivance; it is a collection of individuals, each coalescing into a corporate and well-balanced *ensemble*. Difficulties lie in the way of obtaining the essential perfect balance. There is need, in these works, for a curious blend of alertness and spontaneity with absolute restraint. But individualism can easily be carried too far, to the detriment of this very necessary restraint. A cardinal sin against the canons of "G. & S." is for any young miss or vain youth to indulge in any little trick, mannerism, or unauthorized business in order to attract attention to herself or himself. All through a dramatic or musical work there is some central incident at any particular moment. It is upon this central happening (which need not necessarily occur in the centre of the stage) that the attention of the audience must be directed. In no circumstances would Gilbert, like the true producer he was, allow attention to be distracted from the central figure of a scene, or from any incident, by by-play or other action on the part of another actor—be he principal or chorister. In any play to do so is a bad offence. In Gilbert and Sullivan opera it is reckoned little less than a crime.

While on the stage, even when not actively engaged in what is going on, the chorus must preserve its interest and alertness. That is not to say that it should exhibit these attributes by allowing its eyes to search in the darkened auditorium for friends known to be there, or by indulging in whispered conversations. The interest must be confined to the action on the stage, and must be as that of onlookers at some event in which they are interested, but which does not immediately concern them.

Let us consider, as one example of many such, the scene in the first act of *Iolanthe*, where Strephon is reciting his difficulties; the trouble

he encounters by reason of his immortal "upper half" and human legs. The fairies listen. Although he is actually addressing only one of their number ("My dear aunt," he says), they are all deeply interested in his dilemma. By expression and restrained gesture they show their sympathies towards his perplexities. All this has to be done naturally, and in such a way that no

between themselves, or the reprehensible habit of surveying the audience, the audience will have been made too well aware of their existence, and the effectiveness of the scene will have gone for nothing.

It will be realized, then, that the chorus in the operas has an existence apart from its value to the musical side. Not only does it consist of singers,



THE POLICE IN "THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE"

Photo by J. W. Debenham

A small body of choristers calling for intelligent individual work on the part of each man

member of the audience will, at any time, be tempted suddenly to look from Strephon to one of the fairies who, by reason, say, of a too vigorous shake of the head, diverts the gaze (if only momentarily) from the actor to herself. Strephon must have the undivided attention of the audience, yet if the reaction of the fairies is shown in a restrained and natural manner, the audience will gently have been made aware that they (the fairies) have been listening to the story of his woes, and that they have not been standing about the stage like stuffed figures, waiting (some of them) for the cue for their concerted remark, "Poor fellow!" On the other hand, if the fairies have not been acting during the scene, but have been so human as to indulge in private jokes

but of actors. Each chorister, therefore, should put his or her best acting ability into the piece, and imagine the personage portrayed, a Japanese schoolgirl or a fierce looking pirate, to be a separate character in the opera, as much as is *Katisha* or Major-General Stanley. Each chorus, though fundamentally the same, is, in actual fact, a collection of different types and people. There is a world of difference between the languor of the Rapturous Maidens in *Patience* and the simple Tudor towns-folk of *The Yeomen of the Guard*. The men will realize that, in *Patience*, they are representing soldiers, and must assume a military bearing, not to say swagger, in keeping with the part. In *Iolanthe* the dignified condescension of the peerage must show itself, with a reminder



that the gait and gestures of the young amateur must be adapted to be in keeping with the appearance of age presented by his little character sketch. And so on, throughout all the many characters represented in the choruses.

Some societies are compelled, either through lack of numbers or the smallness of their stage,

*The Pirates of Penzance*, and, to a slightly less extent, the yeomen in *The Yeomen of the Guard*. These are all relatively small bodies of men or girls engaging, from time to time, the central attention of the audience. Apart from the constabulary and military evolutions of the last two groups, it is desirable that they should act as



THE PLAINTIFF AND HER ATTENDANTS

Photo by J. W. Debenham

The small chorus of Bridesmaids in "Trial by Jury" calls for a display of "controlled individuality."

to employ only a few choristers. The smaller the chorus, the more important is the necessity for encouraging individuality, within limits. Eight or ten men, acting capably and intelligently, and perhaps aided vocally by the "unemployed" principals singing in the wings, can make a far more convincing picture than a wooden chorus of thrice that number. This controlled individuality is also necessary where a section of the chorus is taken to form some small, well-defined group. As example one might mention the twelve jurymen in *Trial by Jury*, the bridesmaids in the same opera, and those in *Ruddigore*, the policemen in

individuals rather than as units of a group. It may be taken as a sign of slack production if they act and move as automata. On the other hand, if absolute freedom is given to the detriment of the picture as a whole, then the production could be characterized as inefficient, rather than slack. For if such absolute freedom were allowed, inevitably there would be found three or four of the choristers who would stand out from the rest, and thus by giving, quite unintentionally, a false focus to the *ensemble*, they would tend to spoil the carefully thought out picture and, with it, the spirit of the opera.

Rather than allow this complete freedom, the producer should lay down his instructions to the chorus, saying that here Mr. Brown is to do so-and-so; there Messrs. Jones and Smith are to look at each other with amazed expressions, and so on. But no one member of the chorus, being a brilliant actor, should be given business or action that may bring him more prominence than that achieved by his fellows. The standard of all should be the highest attainable by the least-skilled actor among them.

One way in which this happy state of "controlled individuality" is to be obtained lies in rehearsing each chorister in his work independently of the others. This may be found possible of achievement where only a small chorus is concerned, but, alas, it is a counsel of perfection; an ideal scarcely likely to be reached in the time devoted to the average amateur production. So, despite all the producer can do, much must be left to the individual who, realizing what is needed from him, will so order his actions as to be in perfect keeping with the picture.

It is in these ways that the spontaneity of the blend previously referred to enters into the matter. The alertness is concerned more with such important factors, not peculiar to the operas, as seeing that the stage is properly dressed; that no unsightly gaps are made by members of the chorus standing at irregular distances from each other; or, when grouped together, that they are in the places allotted to them. All this is quite easy if only the choristers will keep their wits about them (and it is a point to which attention should certainly be drawn before the rise of the curtain).

Entrances and exits are important in Gilbert and Sullivan opera, and require careful rehearsing. Nothing is worse than to see a chorus straggling on and off the stage. Many of the entrances in the operas and, more especially, the exits require to be fitted in with music, so arranged that the last note coincides with the disappearance of the last chorister. Naturally, these musical accompaniments were planned to fit in with the number of choristers concerned in the original productions, but it is merely a question of arrangement to adapt them to any number, more or less

than the original. When it comes to the actual performance, lack of alertness on the part of one individual may wreck the entire effect. Nor is this alertness to be dropped when a chorister has left the stage; others are following. One knows, and so does the audience, that there may not be much spare space in the wings, but the illusion of space created by an open landscape is spoiled when an exit too obviously shows signs of the actors being checked by this lack of room. The golden rule, which is not applicable to "G. & S." alone, is always to get clear of the entrance.

But this becomes doubly important where the exit is accompanied by music. It may be intended that the chorus—again taking an example from *Iolanthe*—is departing to "another fairy ring." The fairies trip across the stage and out of sight. Now, should one of them, so soon as she is hidden by the wings, stop to adjust her head-dress, those following behind are automatically checked, and as the end of the line reaches the exit, the effect is more of an undignified scramble to get out of sight, rather than that of fairies flying up into the sky: and, be it added, to some music carefully arranged so that its end coincides with this well thought out exit. It does not fall within my province here to lay down rules for the handling of crowds in the wings, but it may be said that where a musical exit or entrance is concerned, the acting should not cease (in the one case) until the music has stopped, and (in the other) everyone should anticipate the start of the music, and be ready to enter at the exact prescribed moment.

A natural habit of amateurs is to watch the work of the principals. When this is done, one's own work must not be forgotten, nor should the observing be too obvious to the audience. In watching the principals, the chorister's attention may wander, and some important gesture or movement may be overlooked at its proper cue. Although, as stated earlier, the chorus is not required to carry out its movements with military exactness, precision—especially as to the time of beginning a movement—is necessary. Individuality, although called for in the Savoy operas more than almost every other attribute, can be overdone to such an extent as to be replaced by raggedness.

## NATURAL ATTRIBUTES

By ARNOLD L. HASKELL

*Founder of the Camargo Society, Director of the Ballet Club, etc.*

NATURAL grace is an essential. To many people, unused to the study of dancing, "graceful" is the indispensable adjective to "dancer." In actual fact this is by no means always the case. I very much doubt if training can provide it. For twenty dancers who can beat a perfect *entrechat*, scarcely one can walk across the stage to take up a position in a graceful or impressive manner. Training will develop natural grace, it can bluff the tyro into believing it exists where it is absent, but will never make up for it, and it is this quality that may just make the difference between two highly technical performers. Ballet training, while it gives perfect control of movement, if it is misused, frequently results in a stiffness and definite lack of grace.

When considering personality, temperament, and intelligence we are again dealing with natural attributes, the first two of which are exceedingly difficult to define in a positive manner, but their absence is so noticeable that it may cause the first-class technician to spend all her days in the chorus, while her friend, much less good in the classroom, is entrusted with solo after solo. Personality or glamour is more than *brio*, temperament, or the American "sex appeal." It is a combination of all these, yet it contains poise and serenity. Whenever a dancer is called a second Pavlova you can be sure that she lacks it. There is no "second" possible in such a case; it is the triumph of the individual.

Many dancers arrive at their schools with individuality, and through uninspired teaching rapidly lose it, only to become part of a collective personality, a *corps de ballet*. The full expression of a personality is only possible to the finished technician. The pupil will be too worried with detail to be able to express anything at all.

Temperament is equally difficult to define in a positive manner. It does not mean the noisy stamping and handclapping of the typical pseudo-Spanish dancer or the making of "scenes" off stage. It is an aspect of personality, and I only

mention it here because an accusation that you will often hear made against English dancers is that they are lacking in temperament. I disagree with this on the whole, and believe it to arise chiefly on account of the fact that there is not yet a fully established tradition in England, and also from a total misunderstanding of the implications of the word. The French and Italian dancers of to-day would seem far more lacking in temperament, which, used in this sense, I would define as the power, often unconscious, of being able to get across the footlights the reality of what is only a convention. Pavlova in the "Dying Swan" was a supreme example, dancing it in such a manner that one could not analyse the movements in the general feeling of sorrow. This was something far greater than acting ability. It was something inborn, the power to gain contact with an audience. I remember once the thrilling experience of watching from the wings Pavlova dancing the "Bacchanal." The proximity increased the effect, made it almost overpowering, in spite of the loss of all lighting illusions. Here was the embodiment of Bacchic youth, even in the way in which she received the plaudits when the dance had ceased; yet the moment the curtain fell and contact with the audience was cut off the transformation was startling and pathetic; all that remained was an insignificant and a weary woman, young in build but old in her expression, almost the pathetic figure in Vicki Baum's *Grand Hotel*. These then are things that are difficult to write about, and that cannot be learned, but they are the things that make the great artist, and we must understand them if we are to understand the make up of the great dance artist. They are all included in that much misused word "genius."

One would imagine that the dancer would require a more than ordinarily developed sense of music. With the great virtuoso this is undoubtedly the case, but in practice with the general run of dancers it is not so. That great English dancer, Lydia Sokolova, gained her first

big chance in the ballet because having been originally trained as a pianist, she was able to understand and to carry in her head the intricate counting of Ravel's "Daphnis and Chloe," where others, who might have been assigned the part, were completely at sea. I believe that a fine musical sense, a perception that is of *tempo* and



TAMARA TOUMANOVA

Photo by Brewster

not an aesthetic appreciation, which is irrelevant here, is one of those small details, almost impossible to analyse, which make the difference between the good dancer and the great dancer; a difference that is so subtle that it would not be possible to say that the less good performer was in any sense out of time. It is just that little difference that produces in the audience the feeling of complete confidence in the performer. The brilliant young dancer Tamara Toumanova has had a developed musical education, which is immediately noticeable in all her work.

Acting in dancing covers an exceedingly wide

range, from a mere indication of atmosphere in such a ballet as "Sylphides," where a toothy grin would destroy everything, to the definite portrayal of a sadistic Georgian queen, "Thamar." It is important to realize at once that the acting, or mime, as it is called, is an integral part of the whole movement, the facial muscles playing their part in the dance as much as the legs or the arm muscles. In "Giselle," for instance, there is a famous scene of insanity before the unfortunate heroine commits suicide. Now a realistic rendering of insanity, however brilliantly done, would be hopelessly out of place. Yet every time I see that particular scene I am harrowed by it as by the real thing. Pavlova's rendering of it was unforgettable; put it into the middle of a stage play where a mad scene was required, and it might well make the public laugh. Why?

Because ballet is a convention, and, once that convention has been accepted, it is perfectly possible to be realistic within it, or perhaps to be more easily understandable I should have said there is ballet-truth like any other truth. Let us analyse this convention as it applies to the ballet "Giselle." The plot is simple: the village maiden, thinking that she has been betrayed by her lover, goes mad, seizes his sword and falls on it before she can be prevented. What is the truth in life? Impossible to say; but she might well have been ugly, have had a slight squint, and a suspicion of bandy leg. She would most certainly have chosen another method of exit, in spite of the fact that gas ovens were not yet known.

What is the truth on the stage? It depends on the dramatist, but with such a subject he would most certainly never have resisted a long speech, centre of the stage, couched in language that no village maid would use in the circumstances. That also if it were competently written would have its truth.

Now the ballet convention is that people express themselves in movement, not in word, and that that expression in movement is governed entirely in *tempo* and duration by certain music that is being played, music that may possibly express something of the action, but that at this particular period most certainly did nothing more than mark the time. The whole portrayal of madness therefore must be restrained by music and by the actual dance that has been arranged;

also it must be exceedingly direct and simple, because a story is being told without the use of words. The dance before the scene of madness and after is the same if described in technical terms, but the ballerina must suggest in the second dance that it is being performed mechanically by a brain that can no longer co-ordinate muscular movement; that it is a question of reflex and not of will. If the second dance truly contrasts with the first, then there is realism within our convention and the audience will be thrilled and moved. The acting required of the dancer, an ability that is generally missing, is perhaps at the bottom of all highly disciplined movement on the stage. The high standard of ballet acting that is sometimes required, and its extreme difficulty, can be gauged when I state that in Balanchine's "Songes," at one moment when the "ballerina" is already on her points she must tip toe out of the room as a child does. A truly extraordinary blend of realism within our convention. The role, however, was designed for an unusually fine actress, Toumanova, who succeeded to perfection. An experienced producer once told me that he would be able to produce a certain actress in a short time because she had been trained as a dancer, and so knew what to do with her hands. All those actresses belonging to a certain generation, whom we admire on account of their "school," have had a foundation of ballet training. Also I am firmly convinced that dancing is the essential training for film acting, and it is a noticeable fact to someone used to watching ballet that the film star has little conception of movement.

The whole of the theatre is a convention, and the branch known as ballet has the strictest rules. Master those rules and while you may never become a great dancer, acting, whether film or stage, will be more accessible to you.

It is impossible to discuss the role that intelligence plays in artistic creation. I doubt whether it plays a great role. So long as the dancer is possessed of presence of mind that is all that is necessary. Emergencies are frequent, shoes slip off, costumes are torn, the stage is slippery and quick thinking is essential. The audience must never notice.

I regard general artistic knowledge as highly important for the dancer, and I can name

dancers of some merit who have definitely failed through lack of it. The Imperial Ballet School of St. Petersburg provided a thorough general curriculum for its pupils, an education that would put to shame that of the average secondary school. The result has borne fruit all over the world to-day. The St. Petersburg and Moscow dancers,



TOUMANOVA'S "POINTS"

*Photo by Brewster*

widely scattered, have been able to produce ballet, and to foster the understanding of modern art and music. They have created ballet, and not just danced in it. Fokine, Nijinsky, Massine, and others are all products of this magnificent education. The average English dancer stranded from her school would be quite incapable of arranging a dance, let alone choosing suitable music or character costume. Karsavina has told me how when preparing a romantic role she studied the literature and iconography of her subject at length in order to live it convincingly.

The average English dance pupil knows her technique thoroughly, and that is about all. Of

music she will know a little Chopin, a little Delibes, and perhaps some Tchaikovsky; of painting nil, while her practical ideas on period costume will be of the vaguest. If she arranges a dance it is fairly safe to say that it will be a pizzicato Pierrette of sorts.

If the dancer is to be anything more than a machine she need have no great intelligence, but she must take an active interest in literature, music, and especially the plastic arts. This may sound far-fetched to the little girl delighted with her first clean pirouette, but it is vital, and it is the lack of that which is proving such a handicap to our English dancing. I have mentioned above that acting in ballet is frequently nothing more than the suggestion of atmosphere to an audience. Anything so subtle as that can scarcely come from instinct alone; it is only culture that can supply the necessary starting point. The producer may shriek at the coryphée in "Les Sylphides," "Be romantic," but she will still be content with a sickly smile, which she imagines is the real thing; while all the time she requires a background of the Romantic Movement in music, literature, and painting. This is not a far-fetched statement, for in practice it has given us a Tamara Karsavina.

As can be seen by the list, the attributes required by the dancer set such a high standard that only a few can expect to be chosen out of the many who set out. Here it is important to clear up a common misunderstanding that has been broadcast by a lay Press. I refer to the use of the term "Russian ballerina" as applied to any moderately competent dancer. In all countries where there is a dancing tradition and consequently a state opera, "ballerina" is not merely a complimentary term but denotes a special official rank gained by apprenticeship, examination, and work before the public. It will be realized how rare was this distinction when I state that in Imperial Russia, the country *par excellence* of fine dancing, there were but a handful of *prima ballerinas* at any

one period; in our own times Kshessinskaia, Preobrajenskaia, Pavlova, Trefilova, Karsavina, and just before the end, Spessivtseva. Each one of these six was so technically perfect that the subject would not even be questioned, but each had some particular distinguishing genius, which I will discuss when I come to the varying types of ballet. It is necessary to stress this point because a kindly but misinformed Press so frequently cheapens the art of dancing by making high distinction appear too frequent and easy. For every ballerina or dancer of genius I could name ten front-rank pianists, violinists, or actresses. Since the breakdown of the elaborate educational apparatus in Russia, few dancers in the grand manner have appeared.

The outstanding ballerina of to-day is to my mind the young Russian, Tamara Toumanova, pupil of a Russian ballerina and a direct inheritor of the grand manner, flawless in technique, with all the list of attributes I have mentioned in the highest degree. Mesdemoiselles Ryabushinskaia and Baronova, both trained by great ballerinas in the Paris emigration, show quite exceptional gifts and lead one to think that a genuine ballet renaissance is on the way. There is one great English dancer, Alicia Markova, trained in the Russian school, who joined the Diaghileff Ballet at the age of 13 years and who has appeared in all the classical roles, and has developed English dancing by creating the great majority of the recent English works. There are others whose position is more debatable, but an academic discussion of such a kind is of no value outside the foyer of a theatre. We do not know accurately what is occurring in Russia, but reports have it that the School has produced one marvel in Simeonova. I cannot write of this at first hand. The pre-eminence of these young dancers stresses once again the immense practical value of tradition, and leads us to the question of the practice and economics of dancing in our country, where we have no State theatres or subsidies.

# HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR PLAY

By CONSUELO M. DE REYES

*Producer, Little Theatre, Citizen House, Bath, and Everyman Theatre, Hampstead ;  
Lecturer in Drama, University College, Exeter*

THE plays that are most suitable for small groups are those which have a definite plot, well-drawn characters, and in which the action does not depend upon temperament. Romantic, costume, or naturalistic plays are undoubtedly the simplest, and seldom fail in their appeal. The most difficult play for the amateur to "get over" is comedy. I well remember Ellen Terry describing this to me when she said "we can all of us feel in the mood for tragedy, we have only to think of tragic things, but it is far more difficult to feel in the mood for comedy"—and is indeed just the rare, scintillating essence of comedy that is most difficult for any but the highly trained actor to impart.

Recently the one-act play has grown greatly in popularity. It has many advantages for the Community Group. A programme of one-act plays presents greater variety as a rule than a full-length play. It is also easier for the actor. The problem of creating a character for a short time only and throughout a simple incident, is far less than that of showing consistent character development.

The one-act play gives more scope to a greater number of actors and thus functions as an excellent training ground. Rehearsals are rendered easier, because a single group only need be called, and, consequently, there is no overlapping or waste of time. Scenic designers welcome the one-act play, which frequently gives them the opportunity they desire for creating a single impression with their scene set, and if sufficient contrast can be obtained in the plays selected, an excellent programme will result. It is wise to choose a programme of one-act plays that will appeal to varying tastes, and to include a fantasy, a serious play, and a comedy. Variety is indeed the secret of success in the choice of plays by any dramatic organization. After a series of one-act plays has been given, a full-length play should next be selected, and it will at once be found how greatly the actors have improved in dramatic technique after the experience of the short play; they will be ready for more sustained dramatic work.

If a play with a tragic *motif* is chosen, great care must be taken to see that the continuity of interest is sustained and that the action works up to a swift, definite climax. On this depends the atmosphere of the play, which the slightest break will ruin. Complete range and control of the voice are above all necessary in tragedy. If a comedy is selected, the players must have considerable personality, together with the power of expressing it, and a sound knowledge of the stage. They must "play for pace," remembering that a slow cue can be compared only to a dropped tennis ball. The return is lost and the interest severed. Slowness in pick-ups is the most serious amateur fault, and one that will plunge the most brilliant play into an abysmal gloom. I have usually found a method of "quick practice" half-way through the rehearsals the only remedy. All the actors are asked to sit in a row and to pick up their sentences as quickly as possible. Freed from movement and gesture, their minds are able to concentrate solely on their words; if the slightest pause occurs between the completion of one sentence and the opening of the following one, a bell is rung denoting a missed cue. Many students have confessed to be unaware that they were pausing until they heard the bell, and in their desire to avoid it, they soon attain professional speed.

The easiest plays to do, because they fall within the scope and knowledge of all, are the naturalistic plays that deal with ordinary people in everyday life. These plays may be comedies, tragedies, or in dialect. If the dialect is one unknown to the actors, it is far better to transpose it and to render the play in the local dialect throughout, rather than to attempt a painful and spurious imitation that will embarrass the players and probably break down half-way through the play.

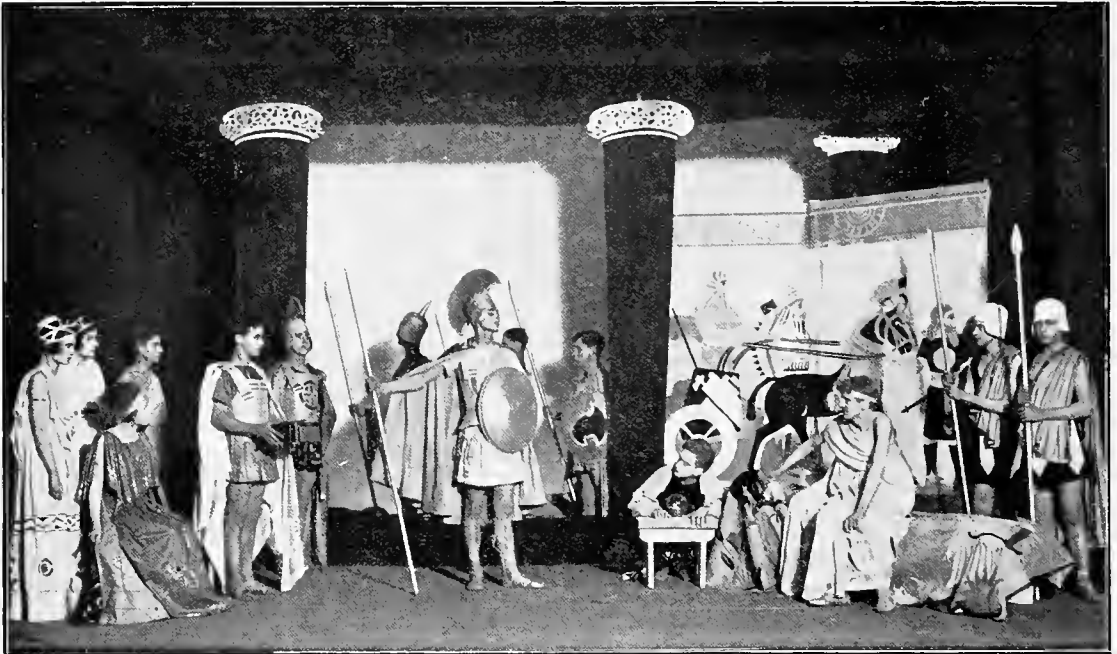
Naturalistic plays are usually easy to set and to cast. They demand the supreme gifts of sympathy and of observation. It was said of Irving that when he had to play a certain type of man he would mount a London bus and cruise down the streets until he saw that man. Then he would



get off the bus and follow him, scrutinizing every detail of his walk and appearance. Finally, he would get into conversation with the man, noticing every trait of his personality, the lines of his mouth, and the trend of his opinions. Directly he was able to think as that man, he could be that man, and present a perfect interpretation upon the stage.

Many of our most famous contemporary

the players and their audience. The producer should avoid any play that has been given in his area before. The aim of the community player is to supplement life and to contribute to it those things that cannot be had by other means. In many of the unemployed mining areas, Little Theatre players are begged to give the plays of Galsworthy and Shaw since these embody certain economic ideas that the members of the mining



COSTUMES AND PROPERTIES DESIGNED BY PUBLIC SCHOOL BOYS FOR A GREEK PLAY

Note use of American cloth for armour. All designs have been stencilled in the art classes

dramatists are the authors of naturalistic plays—Shaw, St. John Ervine, Eugene O'Neill, Harold Brighouse, etc.—and, consequently, there is no lack of material.

Another important consideration is the power and time of the producing staff. The most common error in the theatre is to attempt too much. The director should undertake a little less than he can perform, since in this way he will avoid too great a strain upon his players at that last critical moment before production, when extra rehearsals have to be called.

In selecting any play, great consideration must be given to the relationship that exists between

area desire to have explained and to debate. To present such a keen, earnest audience, face to face with the grim realities of life, with a drawing-room farce would merely be an insult. If, however, interest in a dramatic group is to be well sustained, it is far better for the director to decide on several small plays at intervals throughout the year, than on one big play, if the one play is likely to absorb all the energies of the Group.

The director should start a new play as soon as one is finished; if actual performances are impossible, dramatic readings held monthly form an excellent substitute. They succeed in keeping the players together, in enlarging a knowledge of



dramatic literature, and frequently in discovering new and unexpected talent among the players. Well-organized dramatic readings frequently attract a large audience if thrown open to the public, and are invariably successful if the theme of the play is one that leads to debate and can be followed by a public discussion. Such dramatic readings should, of course, be preceded by

of a play upon non-acting members or friends, before any decision concerning its production, is to place the readers behind screens on a stage that is darkened except for the concealed lights required by the cast. The effect of the play then becomes that of a broadcast, and if the same critical facilities as usually attend the reception of any wireless play are awakened in the minds



SCENE DESIGNED TO SHOW SETTING ON SMALL STAGE FOR CHRONICLE PLAY, "MR. PICKWICK IN BATH"

Note use of period furniture

thorough rehearsals. It is effective to allow the readers in such dramatic readings to have all the accessories of costume, properties, lighting, and to fulfil all the necessary movements, thus embodying everything required in the play, except the actual memorizing of lines. The visual and audible impressions are thus received by the spectator, and the mind readily accepts the convention of having the play read, while the players, freed from the inevitable nervousness consequent upon memorizing lines, are enabled to concentrate more fully upon expression and characterization with a consequent gain to their technique.

Another interesting method of giving a dramatic reading, or, if preferred, of testing the effect

of the audience, it soon becomes apparent whether the play, if it is produced, will be a success or not. Frequently this is a more effective method of giving a dramatic reading, and the result of the subdued light is to intensify the concentration upon the spoken words.

An interesting feature of dramatic work at the present moment is the popularity of historical plays: *The Lady of the Lamp*, *St. Joan*, *Richard of Bordeaux*, are all examples of the vitalizing force that may be poured upon what we are far too prone to consider the "dry bones of history."

The Chronicle Plays give us the inner lives of great thinkers and poets in their struggles and in their triumphs; we become aware of the various

psychological forces that influenced them, and led up to their achievements. In these plays a sense of period also has to be obtained; costume, architecture, furniture, manners, must all be accurate; gradually, the actual history of the period becomes absorbed, and a lively interest is awakened in every object that centres round the play.

Historical and Chronicle Plays are well worth giving, for during their preparation it will be found that many other avenues of interest are opened up. A big production, at the Everyman Theatre, of *Our Little Old Lady*, based on the life and letters of Queen Victoria, eclipsed all other plays in its interest both for players and audience. Many visits were paid to Art Galleries and Museums to study portraits of the Queen at various ages; her costumes, as displayed in the London Museums, were faithfully copied both in style and material, and pilgrimages were paid to Kensington Palace, to Windsor, and to Frogmore by the players, so that the actual atmosphere might become real to them. This had a tremendous effect in awakening enthusiasm among those who would formerly have voted the subject dull.

It was found that the struggles of the early Victorian era, the poverty, unemployment, and dissatisfaction were enormously akin to those of our own period. This started the economists on a wide area of reading, and at each rehearsal they would return with further information concerning some of the passages of the play. Family albums were ransacked for photographs of Victorian dresses; many came to light out of the lavender mist of half a century, and when the play was given it was a faithful and moving picture of a period that still fell within the memory of many. It was then that the audience themselves asked to borrow a library of reference books, and insisted on parties being conducted to the various localities of the play, thus showing that they were determined to rediscover the knowledge for themselves.

Another type of play is that which can be designated as a comedy of manners. This lacks much of the plain sincerity of the historical play, and is a somewhat exaggerated method of playing. Nevertheless, it is, for those reasons, a fine training-ground for actors. Every character in

this type of play should have a distinct personality, and there should be marked stylism about speech and gestures. The dialogue is usually full of subtle suggestions and must be spoken with direct inflexions to drive the points home.

If Classic or Greek Drama is to be attempted, great care must be taken to secure an absolute rhythm of speech and movement. "The chorus should be considered as a living frieze, moving to time, as music does in bar spaces, and when coming to rest, holding the position taken as steadily as a statue." Every action on the part of the chorus should be specifically studied with relation to the protagonist, since it is the aim of the chorus to amplify the protagonist's argument.

Morality and Mystery Plays demand much the same treatment, and to them the players should bring dignity of deportment, impersonality, and the measured rhythm of speech. The same qualities are also required in Pageants. Here a broad effect should above all be attained. This type of play must be as vivid and striking as a poster. All extraneous detail should be omitted. Colours, movements, and gestures must be big, and the whole pageant scheme should be built in blocks.

It is frequently a mistake in pageants to employ too few players. The whole effect should be that of a mass production, and it must be remembered that the human figure is apt to look diminutive against the immensity of Nature. Speech is practically non-existent in the pageant and consequently the argument of the play must be obtained through the eye. The ideas and thoughts of the characters or groups must be conveyed by mime, which may be described as the most difficult and also as the most effective form of acting. Mime is indeed a crystallization of acting, comparable to a black and white sketch, in which the main lines only appear, and there is nothing to confuse or distract the eye. A course in mime work is indeed an essential basis for all actors. Once it is acquired, the dramatization of mimes and ballads becomes easy, and these are invariably welcomed by the audience for their freshness and originality. Such are some of the many possibilities that play production affords.

The best advice is, however, to select that play which most aptly embodies the spirit of the locality and the technique of the players.

# A DICTIONARY OF STAGE TERMS

Compiled by EDWARD W. BETTS

Assistant Editor of "The Era"

EVERY profession has its own peculiar esoteric terminology, but none has so choice and elaborate a wealth of specialized words and expressions as that which has generally been permitted to call itself "the profession." It has been wittily suggested by Mr. John Drinkwater that the large collection of theatrical terms was invented by stage carpenters to keep producers in their place.



MR. EDWARD W. BETTS

As Mr. Drinkwater had considerable experience as a producer in the early years of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, there may be something more than pleasantry in the remark I have quoted!

A knowledge of stage terms is essential to the amateur producer, even in these days of simplified stage direction.

It is for the guidance of the amateur producer that the following comprehensive list of stage and theatrical terms has been compiled. And if I may revert to Mr. Drinkwater's humorous definition, if you are one of those who delight in the comic side of things, I recommend to you the exceedingly funny stage vocabulary included in Mr. Seymour Hicks's book for amateurs, *Acting*.

I must also express my indebtedness to Mr. C. B. Purdom and Mr. Donovan Maule, who, in their respective books, *Producing Plays* (Dent) and *The Stage as a Career* (Pitman), include lists of stage technical terms. W. G. Fay's *Short Glossary of Theatrical Terms* (French) is also useful.

**ACT.** The main division in a play. At one time all plays were written in five acts; three acts are now the customary ration taken by dramatic authors.

**ACT DROP.** A painted cloth lowered during the performance of a play. It is usually employed for a subsidiary scene to be played while changes are being made on the larger part of the stage behind the cloth.

**ACTING AREA.** The part of the stage on which the action of a play takes place. The working area is at the sides where the stage hands are employed.

**ACTING MANAGER.** A theatrical pleasantry. The A. M. looks after nearly everything except acting! His better title would be business manager, as he is responsible for all business arrangements, particularly in regard to the front of the house: q.v.

**ACTION.** No longer applied exclusively to all movement on the stage. The term as now used covers plot-movement, as well as bodily movement on the stage by the actors.

**ACTOR.** A man whose profession it is to impersonate characters on the public stage (fem.: Actress).

**ACTOR-MANAGER.** Now nearly extinct. When the actor-manager really flourished, the term meant an actor who ran his own company and was his own producer and bright particular star.

**ADAPTATION.** Now usually applied to plays abbreviated or "adapted" for twice nightly performance, or to plays adapted from novels by dramatists other than the author.

**AMATEURS.** No longer a term of reproach. It is now used to designate a man or woman who enthusiastically undertakes anything for love.

**AMBER.** A soft yellow light used to represent sunlight. It is the most used light in the theatre.

**AMPHITHEATRE.** The use of this word as applied to a circular or semi-circular building with a central stage or arena has been almost forgotten. In some theatres, the first tier is so called.

**APRON STAGE.** Any part of the stage that extends in front of the proscenium arch. It is sometimes called apron-piece, fore-stage, or platform.

Soliloquies in Shakespeare's time and afterwards were spoken on the apron-stage, so also was the *Aside*: q.v.

**ARGENTINE.** Material used in scenery as an imitation of glass for windows.

**ART THEATRE.** A name sometimes given to the American Little Theatres.

**ASIDE.** A remark not intended to be heard by the other characters on the stage. This was the early device of enabling the audience to "overhear" what a certain character was thinking. Eugene O'Neill elaborated this idea in *Strange Interlude*.

**A.S.M.** Assistant Stage Manager who is also usually the prompter.

**AT RISE.** The stage when set and awaiting the first rise of the curtain. From the point of view of the genuine play-lover, the most exciting minute in the world when anything may be about to happen.

**AUDITORIUM.** That part of the theatre where the audience watches the play. Actors call it "in front."

**BABY SPOT.** A small spot light: q.v.

**BACK.** Behind the scene set on the stage. The full expression is back-stage.

**BACK CLOTH OR BACK DROP.** Painted or plain cloth or curtain dropped or hung across the back of the stage. Usually the main portion of the scene as seen by the audience.

**BACKING.** Scenery or sections of scenery used to mask openings such as doors and windows.

**BALCONY SPOT.** Originally a spot light operated from the front of the balcony. Two or three such lights are now usually placed on the balcony front and are operated by the electrician from the main switch board on the prompt side of the working area of the stage.

**BALLERINA.** Female ballet dancer.

**BALLET.** A series of dances introduced into grand opera. In later years, dances with pantomime telling a definite story. Diaghileff brought the Russian Ballet to an unprecedented plane of efficiency and proficiency. The Camargo Society is the leading organization for the development of ballet in England.

**BALUSTRADE SCENE.** A flat with a balustrade painted on it.

**BAND ROOM.** A room provided for the use of the orchestra (usually under the stage) when the players are not needed in the orchestra pit.

**BAR.** In many London theatres the bars and programmes are let to contractors. In those theatres where the management retain control of the bars, it is a frequent joke that the profits from the drinks compensate for the losses on the plays!

**BATTEN.** Piping or timber on which scenery is suspended. The batten is supported from the grid.

**BATTENS.** Rows of lights suspended over the stage.

**BEAM BORDERS.** Borders painted to represent beams in old rooms.

**"BEGINNERS PLEASE."** The call-boy's warning that the characters opening an act must take their places on the stage.

**BIRD.** "Getting the bird" is the professional's euphemism for an unfavourable reception. It originated with the shrill whistle of disapproval indulged in by gallery boys.

**BLACK-OUT.** A sudden and simultaneous switching off of all lights on the stage.

**BLINDERS.** Lights facing the audience, often used in conjunction with the stage black-out, when scenes are changed without the curtain being lowered.

**BLOCK.** Pulley wheel in the grid over which scenery lines pass on their way to the fly rail.

**BOARDS.** The professional actor's pet name for the stage. A link with the early days when the stage consisted of boards on trestles.

**BOOK.** Copy of play used by the prompter, hence the phrase often heard at rehearsals: "What does the book say?"

**BOOKINGS.** The number of reserved seats sold in advance.

**BORDER.** Narrow strip of painted canvas suspended from above stage and running parallel with top of proscenium. It is used to screen lights, and usually represents ceiling, sky, or branches of trees.

**BOX-LIGHTS.** A light and reflector contained in a metal box.

**BOX-SET.** Scene comprised of three walls, the fourth wall being "taken out" for the benefit of the audience.

**BRACE.** Length of timber or iron attached at

one end to a flat and at the other to the floor of the stage for keeping a piece of scenery rigid.

**BRAIL.** Moving a suspended piece of scenery by hauling it out of the vertical.

**BRIDGE.** Gallery across and behind the proscenium arch. There are also galleries on the other three sides above the stage, used for shifting scenery, scenic painting, spot-lighting, and other behind-the-scenes activities. On the stage itself, a bridge is a section of the stage that can be raised or lowered.

**BRIEF.** Free pass to a theatre.

**BROAD.** Usually applied to comedy. A part or piece in which the humour is "laid on with a trowel." When a variety comedian is described as broad it is meant that he has no difficulty in calling a spade a sanguinary shovel. In short, broad is the opposite of subtle.

**BUNCHES.** A number of lamps used with a metal hood or reflector. See **LENGTH**.

**BURLESQUE.** A parody. Either a play or part that exaggerates the idiosyncrasies of other players or plays. Sheridan's *The Critic* is a perfect example of a burlesque. So is Florence Desmond's impersonations of film stars in her *Hollywood Party*.

**BURNER LIGHTS.** Clusters of lamps or standards.

**BUSINESS.** Action interpolated into a scene by the actors. Much of the "business" in standard plays is traditional. In a larger sense business denotes all action and movement on the stage apart from dialogue.

**CAKLE.** Dialogue.

**CAKLE CHUCKER.** Prompter.

**CALL.** A summons for a rehearsal. A warning to an actor that he must take his place on the stage. An appearance before the audience at the end of an act or a play.

"**CALL BEGINNERS.**" The stage manager's direction to the call boy to summon those actors who are to be on the stage at rise.

**CALL BOARD.** A baize covered notice board, usually found just inside the stage door, whereon notices applying to the artists or theatre staff are affixed.

**CALL-BOY.** A stage-hand who has to call the actors when required on the stage.

**CARPET CUT.** A hinged floor board that clips down any floor coverings on the stage.

**CAST.** The actors taking part in a play. "To cast" is to select the players considered most suitable for definite parts.

**CASTORS.** Wheel in metal fitting inserted in bottom of heavy flats to facilitate moving.

**CEILING.** Piece of cloth stretched on a framework and placed on top of a "box-set": q.v.

**CEILING SPOT.** Spotlight placed on the ceiling or in an opening in the ceiling of the auditorium that is focused on a particular point of the scene.

**CENTRE-LINE.** A line—often imaginary—drawn from back to front of the stage from which positions are calculated. The positions, centre, left-centre, right-centre, down-centre, and up-centre are therefore in accordance with this line.

**CENTRE OPENING.** Centre door or opening in a scene.

**CHAMBER SCENES.** An old time term for all scenes representing rooms.

**CHAMBERMAIDS.** A term applied to all female servant parts in a play.

**CHARACTER.** A part taken by an actor.

**CHARACTER PART.** A part wherein peculiarities or particularities of personality are stressed.

**CHOREOGRAPHY.** The design or production of ballet or dances in a play.

**CIRCUS.** When scenery is turned round to show another scene painted on the back, it is called circusing the scene.

**CLAQUE.** Hired body of applauders.

**CLEAT.** Any metal or wooden fixture on the stage to which a line can be tied in order to keep scenery, etc., in position.

**CLEAT LINES.** Length of cord fastened to the top of a flat and thrown over a cleat on the adjoining flat and made fast at the bottom to bind them together.

**CLICK.** To get on good terms with the audience.

**CLIMAX.** The point at which a play should gradually arrive.

**CLOTH.** Any piece of canvas scenery suspended from above the stage. Hence back-cloth, front-cloth, etc.

**CLOWN.** The principal character in the Harlequinade; in Shakespeare, a yokel; to clown a part means to play it foolishly.

**COLOUR-FRAME.** Apertures in front of light

boxes in which gelatines or coloured glasses can be inserted for stage lighting.

**COLOUR-MEDIUMS.** The sheets of gelatine or glass used in colour-frames.

**COLUMBINE.** The "leading lady" of the Harlequinade: q.v.

**COMEDIAN.** An actor who plays humorous parts (fem.: Comedienne).

**COMEDY.** A type of play. Aristophanes wrote the first great comedies, and for years comedy meant a play with a happy ending—as opposed to tragedy. To-day, comedy is little more than a farce, and a musical comedy is—well, musical comedy!

**COMEDY OF MANNERS.** Comedies in which character-study and amusing dialogue are the chief elements. Molière, Congreve, Sheridan, Oscar Wilde, and W. Somerset Maugham are representative exponents of this type of comedy.

**COMIC OPERA.** Play with music, having a happy ending. The most popular pieces of this kind are by Gilbert and Sullivan.

**COMMEDIA DELL' ARTE.** Traditional comedy of a particular Italian School. The characters were always the same—but the actors improvised the dialogue. It was, in short, a theme with variations.

**COMMUNITY THEATRE.** So called because this theatre is organized with the object of pleasing the community rather than of making profit. Community drama is the generic name given to plays suitable for such a theatre.

**CON.** To learn a part by heart.

**CONCERT BATTEN.** The first lighting batten behind the proscenium arch, also known as No. 1.

**CONCERT BORDER.** Used to mask Batten No. 1, if this is not done by the tabs or the pelmet.

**CONSTRUCTION.** This word is used to denote a production in which the action of the play is laid on different levels, and in which ladders, scaffolding, platforms, and steps are used.

**CORKER.** Actor who ruins a play.

**COSTUME PLAY.** Any piece in which the dress is different from that of the present day.

**COSTUME PLOT.** A list of all costumes used in a play and the characters wearing them.

**COUNTER WEIGHT.** The lowering and raising of scenery, etc., is helped by the use of a system in which circular slotted iron weights are used for balancing. The long, centre, and short cloths

(see **GRID**) are controlled by an endless rope on which a counterweight is also fixed so as to reduce the power needed to raise or lower the scenery.

**CRADLE.** A platform with ropes at its corners, suspended from the grid, enabling workmen to work on scenery, etc., where ladders could not be used.

**CUE.** On the stage, an actor's cue is generally the four words spoken by another character immediately preceding his own speech. These words are also typed on his script. Off-stage a cue is a note in the prompt copy indicating signals to the working staff to do certain jobs, such as raising the curtain, changing the lights, etc.

**CURTAIN CALL.** A call taken by an actor at the end of an act or of a play.

**CURTAIN-RAISER.** A one-act play that is performed before the main piece.

**CURTAINS.** Plain cloths suspended across the stage to screen stage from audience or for draping the stage instead of scenery.

**CUT.** Any opening in the stage such as traps, etc. Particularly a narrow transverse section of the stage that can be opened. See **CARPET CUT**.

**CUT CLOTH.** Any piece of scenery that is cut to a pattern. When more than one piece is used on the stage they are numbered 1, 2, 3, etc., beginning with the one nearest the proscenium.

**CUT SCRIPT.** To delete words or business from a play manuscript.

**CYCLORAMA.** Curtain or canvas draped or hung in a curve along the three sides of the stage to represent sky. A permanent cyclorama consists of a curved backing to the stage and is constructed of concrete, or timber and plaster. It is usually painted sky-blue, and by means of lighting, moving clouds, stars, etc., can be represented (see **SCHWABE-HASAIT**).

**DARK.** A theatre is said to be dark when it is closed to the public.

**DAY BILL.** Long narrow poster advertising plays and casts. Its usual size is 30 in. × 10 in.

**DEAD.** When flats or scenery are hung so that the bottom ends are level on the stage they are said to be dead.

**DEAD-HEADS.** Members of an audience who have not paid for admission (see **DRESSING THE HOUSE**).

**DEAD STICK.** One who makes a mess of a scene.

**DÉCOR.** The artistic treatment of stage production. The older word "decoration" is now seldom used.

**DEMET.** Material used for stage curtains.

**DIALECT PART.** A character part spoken in the manner of the country or district to which it belongs.

**DIALOGUE.** The words of a play.

**DICKY BIRD.** An actor who also sings.

**DICTION.** Manner in which words are spoken on the stage.

**DIM.** An order to diminish the stage lights.

**DIMMER.** Apparatus used to reduce stage lighting.

**DIPS.** Small traps in the stage containing adaptors for plugging in lighting units.

**DIRECTOR.** See **PRODUCER**.

**DISCOVERED.** Actors on the stage when the curtain is raised are said to be discovered.

**DISSOLVE.** Gradually changing colour tones in the lighting of a scene.

**DOCK DOORS.** † Leading to the scene dock or store.

**DOG-TOWN.** When plays are tried out in provincial towns, the process is sometimes referred to as "trying it on the dog." Hence the description of "dog-towns."

**DOME.** The extension of the cyclorama (q.v.) curved over the stage.

**DOMINO THUMPER.** A pianist.

**DOWN STAGE.** The front of the stage nearest the audience.

**DRAMA.** Used variously. It may mean plays in general as in Jonson's line: "The drama's laws the drama's patrons give"; or a "heavy" play.

**DRAMATIC.** Pertaining to the drama; used colloquially to mean a particularly impressive style in drama or acting.

**DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.** The characters in a play.

**DRAMATIST.** An author of plays.

**DRESS PARADE.** Inspection by the producer of the actors in the costumes they will wear in a play.

**DRESS REHEARSAL.** The final rehearsal before the first public performance.

**DRESSING THE HOUSE.** When a piece is not going too well, the box-office manager sends complimentary tickets to "dead-heads," a list of whom is kept at the theatre. These tickets are often marked "Evening dress essential," hence, dressing the house.

**DRESSING ROOMS.** Rooms used by actors for dressing and making-up. The dressing room allocated to the principal actor or actress has a star painted on the door—hence the description of star as applied to leading actors.

**DROP CURTAIN.** A painted cloth lowered when acts are divided into scenes. Also called the drop.

**DRY UP.** When an actor forgets his part.

**DUD.** A failure, applied both to a play and to an actor who does not know his part.

**EFFECT PROJECTOR.** An apparatus for throwing pictorial or colour effects upon a scene (see **SCHWABE-HASAIT**).

**EFFECTS.** All light changes, and noises on or off.

**ELEVATOR STAGE.** Also referred to as a lift stage. There are two floors, one above the other, enabling a second scene to be set or struck while the first is in use.

**ENCORE.** "We want another." The call by the audience when they desire a performer to appear again.

**ENSEMBLE.** The general effect of scenery and character groupings.

**ENTR'ACTE.** Between the acts. A musical piece played during the interval.

**ENTRANCE.** An actor's first appearance on the stage in a play is called his entrance.

**EXIT.** To leave the stage.

**EXPRESSIONISM.** The aim of the expressionist is to "express," through writing, acting, or production, thought or emotion direct to the audience.

**EXTERIOR BACKING.** A small scene representing a garden or other outdoor effect set behind a door or window to give an illusion of space outside.

**EXTRA.** A man or woman who "walks on" in a piece.

**F.O.H.** Front of house. The auditorium: q.v.

**FADE-OUT.** Gradual reduction of the stage lighting by means of dimmers: q.v.

**FALSE PROSCENIUM.** When the ordinary proscenium is larger than is required, a false proscenium is fitted so as to make the opening less wide or high or both lower and narrower.

**FALSE PROSCENIUM BORDER.** This is a movable curtain just behind the top of the proscenium arch that can be raised or lowered to mask in the scenery at the top.

**FARCE.** A light-hearted play in which the laws of probability can be disregarded.

**FAT.** A "fat" part is one that gives an actor opportunities to score either with lines or business.

**FEATURE.** To "feature," a term borrowed from the movies, means "to star." Hence, feature players are those who take leading parts.

**FEED.** The "feed" is an important man—or woman—in variety. It is his business to play up to—or feed—the comedian. Examples are Chesney Allen to Bud Flanagan, Dwyer to Clapham, and "Ernest" to Frank Tinney.

**FIREPROOF CURTAIN.** A curtain made of asbestos and metal which, when lowered, fits close up against the proscenium and cuts off the auditorium from the stage. The fireproof must be lowered at least once during every performance.

**FIREPROOF (To).** To treat canvas, etc., with fireproofing.

**FIT-UPS.** Travelling theatrical companies that carry their own scenery and equipment for converting a plain platform into a stage.

**FIZZER.** A sure-fire hit applied either to a play or a performance.

**FLAT.** Any piece of scenery canvas stretched on a framework of timber.

**FICKERS.** Circular slotted disc with coloured mediums, revolved in front of a high powered light to flood stage with flickering lights of different colours.

**FLIES.** Galleries running from proscenium wall to back of stage, with thick protecting rail to which lines used to lower and raise scenery can be fastened.

**FLIPPER.** Any small piece of painted scenery hinged to a flat to permit of being folded when travelling or not in use.

**FLOATS.** Footlights: q.v.

**FLOOD LIGHTS.** When a large portion or even the whole of the stage has to be uniformly lit, the scene is "flooded" by means of strong lights in one or more metal cases or boxes.

**FLOP.** A play that fails is a flop.

**FLUFF.** To fluff one's lines is to speak them indistinctly when not quite sure of the exact words.

**FLY.** To suspend anything above the stage.

**FLY-FLOOR.** Stage hands' gallery on sides off stage.

**FLY LADDERS.** Ladders on either off side of the stage by which flymen reach fly-floor or gallery.

**FLY-RAIL.** Also known as pin rail. A rail on the fly-floor used for fastening the lines used for flying scenery.

**FOLLOW.** To follow an actor on the stage with a spot light: q.v.

**FOOTLIGHTS.** A line of lights with strong reflections along the front of the stage. The lights are usually coloured white, blue, and amber, which can be used simultaneously or separately (also called "Foots").

**FORE-STAGE.** See APRON.

**FORTUNY SYSTEM.** Stage lighting by indirect means named after the Italian inventor.

**FOX WEDGES.** Wooden wedges placed under flats when stage is raked to keep them perpendicular.

**FRAME PIECE.** Another term for flat: q.v.

**FRENCH FLAT.** A cloth mounted on a frame with "practical" windows and doors.

**FRONT OF THE HOUSE.** The Auditorium: q.v.

**FRONT-PIECE.** Another name for a curtain raiser: q.v.

**FRONT SCENE.** A scene set as near the front of the stage as possible to enable the next scene to be set behind it.

**FROST.** Piece of ground glass placed in front of light to reduce its strength.

**FROST (A).** A play that fails to attract.

**FULL SET.** Scene that occupies the whole of the stage.

**GAG.** Any dialogue or lines introduced into a play not in the book. To gag is to make up lines impromptu.

**GAUZES.** Thin net, battened top and bottom, used to suggest fog or dimness when placed in front of lights.

**GELATINE.** Transparencies in various colours for use in stage lighting. Also called mediums.

**GET IN.** Bring scenery into a theatre.

**GET OUT.** Take out scenery.

**GET OVER.** To "get over" is to become *en rapport* with the audience. From "get over the footlights."

**GHOST.** The ghost walks on treasury nights. In other words salaries are paid on Fridays or Saturdays according to the custom of the theatre.



**GLASS CRASH.** To make the illusion of falling through a glass window, or a crash, a quantity of broken glass is emptied from a bucket on to a piece of sheet iron.

**GO ON.** To make an entrance on the stage.

**GRAVE TRAP.** A large rectangular trap in the stage near the front, used for the *Hamlet* grave scene and similar scenes.

**GRAVY.** Suggestiveness.

**GREASE PAINTS.** Make-up paints with lard as a basis, and so easy to be removed.

**GREEN.** The front curtain used to be so called because it was made of green baize.

**GREEN ROOM.** A room near the stage where actors used to meet and wait for their calls.

**GRID.** A loft or skeleton roof over the stage.

Here are all the sets of pulleys over which the lines for working the scenes pass on their way to the fly-rail. To ensure that curtains and cloths are level or "on the dead" when lowered, it is necessary to have three blocks and one bend to each cloth suspended: these lines are called "short" (nearest the flies), "long" (for the line on the prompt side), and "centre." Between each set of three pulleys are thin battens and looked at from the stage they have the appearance of a large gridiron, whence its name.

**GROMMET.** A short piece of cord attached to the top of a cloth to which the working lines can be fastened.

**GROOVES.** Wooden grooves into which flats could be slid. Seldom used now that flying is so much employed.

**GROSS.** The receipts from advance bookings and money taken at the doors.

**GROUND ROW.** Low pieces of scenery to represent wells, ledges, etc.

**HAND PROP.** Anything that is carried on to the stage by an actor. A list of articles used by the cast in a play is carefully prepared and kept.

**HANGING PIECE.** A piece of scenery that is flown.

**HARLEQUIN.** Originally one of the characters in the Italian *Commedia dell'arte*. In our day, a character in Harlequinade who has the power of making himself invisible to the other characters when he lowers his visor.

**HARLEQUINADE.** A short play in dumb show

which (sometimes) follows a Christmas pantomime. The characters are Clown, Harlequin, Columbine, Pantaloon, and Policeman.

**HEAD ROOM.** Space above the stage where scenery can be flown.

**HEAVEN.** Concave shaped back and top of the stage representing sky.

**HEAVIES.** A "heavy man" is an actor who plays serious parts that are plentifully provided with "fat": q.v.

**HISTRIONIC.** Appertaining to stage acting. Generally used in relation to over-emphasized acting.

**HOUSE.** A good house or a bad house means that the theatre is well or badly filled with paying members of the audience.

**HOUSE LIGHTS.** The lighting system in the auditorium.

**INGÉNUÉ.** The part of a young girl.

**INSET.** A small scene inside a larger one.

**INTERLUDE.** A simple play of the sixteenth century, performed without scenery.

**INTERVAL.** The time between the acts of a play. Interval music is that played during these breaks in the play. In variety theatres, the interval has been renamed intermission; why, nobody knows.

**JAZBO.** Vulgarity.

**JOG.** Narrow flat used in a box set for setting back alcoves.

**JOIST.** Heavy timber to which flooring boards are nailed when making a bridge from one rostrum to another.

**JUICE.** Electric current.

**JUVENILE.** The juvenile lead is the principal young part in a play. He is usually the hero. All young parts in a play are professionally known as juveniles.

**L. 1.** Left hand first entrance on the stage. (Audience's right.)

**L. 2.** Left hand second entrance.

**LADDER LIGHTS.** Row of lights fixed to a vertical pipe and placed behind the tormentor: q.v. Also known as proscenium lights.

**LEAD.** The principal—or leading—character in a play. Hence juvenile lead, heavy lead, leading lady, second lead, and so on.

**LEAD BLOCKS.** These are wooden or steel

cases surrounding three pulley wheels through which the short, long, and centre lines travel from the grid to the fly-floor.

**LEFT.** The prompt or audience's right hand side of the stage.

**LENGTH.** Small portable line of lights that can be attached to pieces of scenery.

**LIGHT GROUND ROW.** A batten used on the floor of the stage.

**LIGHTING BATTEN.** A length of metal running from one side of the stage to the other, wired to take electric lamps.

**LIGHT-PLOT.** Complete description of all the lighting in a play, with cues showing when and where it is to be used in a play.

**LIME.** A single portable light. (The word limes derives from the pre-electric days when oxyhydrogen or similar "limelight" was the main stage illuminant. "Stealing the limelight" is a phrase of obvious meaning that has gone into general use.)

**LINE.** Anything used on the stage for tying, lashing, etc., is a line. Grid lines are  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. hemp or  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. wire rope.

**LINE OF BUSINESS.** An actor's line of business is the part or parts in which he specializes.

**LITTLE THEATRE.** In this country the Little Theatre Movement usually means Repertory. In the United States it means the Amateur Movement.

**LOW COMEDY.** Humour of the obvious, elementary type.

**LOWER OUT.** To let down a cloth from the grid: q.v.

**L.U.E.** Left upper entrance. The last entrance on stage nearest the right hand of the audience.

**LYRICS.** Songs in a musical play.

**MADDERMARKET THEATRE.** An amateur theatre at Norwich, the only theatre in England having an Elizabethan stage.

**MAKE-OFF.** The last flats down stage on either side that join up the scene to the proscenium or proscenium wings.

**MAKE-UP.** The grease paint, wigs, and other materials used by actors. "To make-up": To alter the appearance so as to allow for the difference caused by the strong artificial lighting on the stage.

**MARIONETTE.** A puppet used to represent characters on a miniature stage.

**MASK.** To cover a part of the scene that should be visible to the audience, or, worse, to hide from the view of the audience an actor who is speaking or carrying on part of the action.

**MASK-IN.** To cover any opening in a scene with curtains or flats to prevent the audience from seeing the parts of the stage not in use.

**MASTER CARPENTER.** The stage carpenter responsible for the department that controls the making and using of scenery.

**MATINÉE-CALL.** An announcement on the notice board that there will be an additional afternoon performance.

**MEDIUMS.** Square pieces of coloured gelatine placed in front of a light-box to secure colour effects on the stage.

**MELODRAMA.** A play of strong contrasts and a happy ending.

**MENAGERIE.** Pet name by actors for members of the orchestra.

**MEZZANINE FLOOR.** The floor under the stage.

**MIME.** Acting in a play without words. *L'Enfant Prodigue* is one of the best known.

**MIRACLE PLAY.** A medieval play with religious characters. A Morality is somewhat similar, except that the characters personify abstract qualities. A Mystery introduces the Deity.

**MUSIC CUE.** A note on the prompt copy of a play to indicate when music is to be used either on the stage or in the orchestra. Also sometimes called music plot.

**MUSICAL COMEDY.** A play with music and dancing, of a light and vivacious kind.

**NATURALISTIC.** Production and acting in a natural manner. Sometimes called the "drawing room" style.

**NEWELL.** The end post of the hand-railing of a staircase.

**NOISES OFF.** Any sounds made behind or at the side of the stage to give the illusion of storms, rain, wind, horses, motors, etc. These noises are entered in the prompt book with indication when they begin and end.

**NUMBERS.** The songs and dances in a musical play. These are numbered in rotation for convenience of reference and are hence called numbers.

**OBLIQUE.** Scenery set at more than a right angle to the centre line is said to be set oblique.

**OFF.** The part of the stage not seen by the audience.

**OFFER.** When fitting doors or windows to their frames the carpenter "offers" them to the frames to see that they fit.

**OFF-SET.** A portion of a scene set at right angles to the centre line, except the backings.

**OLD MEN.** The actors who play the oldest characters in a play.

**O. P.** Opposite prompt. Off stage on the left hand side of the audience.

**ON THE ROAD.** On tour, applying to companies travelling from one town to another.

**OPEN OFF.** A practical door or window that opens out of the stage.

**OPEN ON.** Door or window that opens on to the stage.

**OPERA.** A dramatic composition in which music is the main feature.

**OPERETTA.** A light opera.

**ORCHESTRA PIT or WELL.** The place occupied by the musicians, immediately in front of the stage.

**PACE.** The speed at which a play is taken.

**PACKS.** Flats placed against each other on the side wall or back of the stage or in store.

**PAGEANT.** Plays, or tableaux, given in the open-air. Usually an historical sequence.

**PAINT-FRAME.** Large wooden frame on which canvas is stretched by the artist who paints the scene.

**PANORAMA.** The cyclorama (q.v.) is sometimes so-called, though a panorama is really a set of scenes painted on a long stretch of canvas mounted on cylinders worked by hand from one side of the stage to the other.

**PANTOMIME.** From the Latin *Pantomimus*—"the all-imitator." A play or part of a play where the plot is entirely represented by action without dialogue. The term is sometimes applied to any foolery on the stage. The Christmas pantomime which is now the generally accepted idea of the term is an entertainment based on a nursery tale. *Cinderella*, *Babes in the Wood* and *Aladdin* are the most popular in order of merit.

**PANTOMIME BUSINESS.** A term meaning that a play is doing exceptionally well.

**PAPER.** Free admission pass. To "paper a

house" is to have a liberal sprinkling of "dead-heads" in the house.

**PAPER SET.** Interior set in which walls are covered with wall-paper and not painted.

**PARQUET STAGE CLOTH.** Cloth painted like parquet flooring and used to cover the floor of the stage for interior scenes.

**PART.** The words, business, and cues of each character separately typed.

**PASS DOOR.** The connecting door between the stage and the front of the house.

**PASTORAL.** Romantic play in a rural setting. Also an open air performance.

**PATCHES.** Small patterned pieces of black court plaster worn on the face in eighteenth century plays.

**PEG.** A large screw with flat handle for fastening braces to flats on the floor of the stage.

**PELMET.** Short curtain or valance at top of proscenium to mask in Batten No. 1. Also a valance at the top of a window to mask the curtain pole.

**PERCHES.** Wooden or iron platforms on either side of the stage at the back of the proscenium twelve feet from stage level, where are the limes, arc lamps, and other lights used for the stage area just behind the footlights.

**PERMANENT SETTING.** A scene so designed that the principal parts remain fixed during the performance. Where only one scene is used throughout it is referred to as a "one set" play.

**PICTURE STAGE.** This, I am afraid, is a term of contempt for the pretty pretty style of stage production that regards the proscenium as a frame for a picture.

**PILOT LIGHT.** Small electric bulb on main switchboard in circuit with stage and house lights. While the bulb is lit, the electrician knows that everything is "O.K."

**PLAN.** The plan of the theatre seats usually fixed on the counter of the box office.

**PLAY.** As a noun, a story in dialogue form intended for public performance on a stage. As a verb, to take a part in such a performance. Hence a player.

**PLAY DOCTOR.** A man with practical knowledge of the stage who is often called in to rewrite weak passages and strengthen the action of a play.

**PLOT.** Idea round which a play is written. Often meaning the story-development of a play.

**PLUG-BOX.** Box containing set of plug holders to which plugs feeding portable lights are attached.

**PONG.** When an actor forgets or does not know his part, and makes up dialogue as he goes along, he is said to be "ponging."

**POSITION.** Places on the stage where the actors must stand or sit. The positions are determined by the producer during rehearsals.

**PRACTICAL.** Doors, windows, etc., which open, and, indeed, anything on the stage which does what it is accustomed to do in real life.

**PREMIÈRE.** The first public performance of a play.

**PRO.** Member of "The profession."

**PRODUCER.** Person responsible for the general presentation of a play. The producer's status has much increased during the past twenty years. He is now almost on a parity with the author.

**PROFILE.** Thin pieces of wood with canvas glued to each side, used on edges of flats requiring an irregular outline as foliage, masonry, etc.

**PROMPT.** To remind an actor of his word by repeating the lines from the prompt copy.

**PROMPT-CORNER.** The left side of the stage (the audience's right) just behind the proscenium where the stage manager controls the performance.

**PROPERTIES.** Furniture, pictures, and all other articles used on the stage apart from the actual scenery.

**PROPERTY MASTER (PROPS).** The man in charge of properties.

**PROPERTY PLOT.** A list of all articles used in each scene of a play.

**PROPERTY TABLE.** Small table near the principal entrances where actors' hand props are kept ready for use.

**PROS.** Proscenium. Arch on framework surrounding the stage opening.

**PROS. WINGS.** Wings immediately behind the proscenium.

**PUPPET.** See Marionette.

**QUICK CHANGE.** This may mean a change of scenery or an actor's change of costume. For the latter he makes use of a quick change room made of flats on the side of the stage. It is fitted with chair, table, mirror, and portable light.

**R. 1.** Right hand side first entrance (audience's left).

**R. 2.** Right hand side second entrance.

**RAG.** Front curtain or tabs.

**RAILS.** Rough handrailing put round rostrums and stairs used off stage.

**RAIN DRUM.** A metal drum filled with small shot for producing sound of falling rain. A rain box, using dried peas, is smaller.

**RAKE.** Rise on a stage from footlights to the back. In modern theatre construction the stage is level and the auditorium is raked.

**RAKING PIECE.** Triangular piece of scenery, painted with a mounting road or bank used to mask in a ramp.

**RALLY.** Taking a portion of a play at a greatly increased pace.

**RAMP.** Slope made of planks from a rostrum to the stage.

**RANT.** To speak lines in a noisy manner.

**REALISM.** An effort to make a play resemble real life.

**REHEARSAL.** To prepare for the performance of a play by going through either part or the whole. A rehearsal call is a notice put up on the call board intimating the time, date, and acts to be done at the next rehearsal.

**REP.** A repertory theatre.

**REPERTOIRE.** Plays that a stock company can perform and the parts that are known and can be played by an actor.

**REPERTORY THEATRE.** A theatre with a regular company.

**REPETITION GENERALE.** A private performance of a new play preceding the first night.

**REPRESENTATION.** Performance of a play on the stage.

**RESISTANCE.** Lighting system enabling all lights to be diminished gradually.

**RESPONSIBLE MAN.** Actor who plays small part but can be depended upon for a sound performance.

**RETURNS.** Flats used next to the proscenium to make up the off-stage side of a scene.

**REVEALS.** Board placed behind scenic doors and windows to give an illusion of solidity to the scene.

**REVOLVE.** Scene of flats with castors on bottom sills so that it can be turned quickly to show another scene painted on the other side.

**REVOLVING STAGE.** Circular stage capable of holding up to three or five sets that can be shown to the audience in turn.

**REVUE.** A show of songs, dances, and sketches, usually of a topical order.

**RIGHT OF STAGE.** The half of the stage on the left side of the audience.

**RING IN THE BAND.** The stage manager's signal to the band room for the musicians to take their places in the orchestra pit to play the overture or other necessary music.

**RING UP.** The signal to the flies for the raising of the front curtain at the beginning of a play or act. "Ring down" is, of course, the signal to lower at the end.

**ROLE.** Part taken by an actor.

**ROLL OUT.** Hinged horizontal flap let into bottom of a flat through which performer can roll on to the stage. Used in *Harlequinade*.

**ROSTRUM.** Portable platform used for various purposes. It may consist of a folding framework and a movable stop, as a stockpiece is used as a landing place at the end of stairs, for terraces, etc.

**ROUNDS.** Applause given by the audience.

**R.U.E.** Right upper entrance. The last entrance on the (actor's) right hand side nearest the footlights.

**RUN.** Consecutive performances of a play.

**RUNWAY.** Narrow platform projecting from stage into auditorium either round the outer edge or orchestra pit or above the centre aisle of auditorium. Also called the *joy-plank*.

**SAFETY CURTAIN.** The fireproof curtain: q.v.

**SAND BAGS.** Small canvas bags attached to scenery lines to act as steadiers.

**SAND CLOTH.** Stage cloth painted to represent a road (or sand) to cover the stage in exterior scenes.

**SARDOODLEDUM.** Word coined by Bernard Shaw to denote the kind of well-made (or factory designed) play of which the High Priest was Victorien Sardou (1831-1908).

**SCENARIO.** Short skeleton of the plot of a play with details of scenes and characters.

**SCENE.** A place represented on the stage. Division of a play.

**SCENE DOCK.** Space where scenery is stored.

**SCENE PLOT.** A detailed list of all scenes in a play in order of use.

**SCENERY.** Canvas or wooden frames (see **FLATS**) or any construction of wood and canvas or other material used to represent a scene.

**SCHWABE-HASAIT SYSTEM.** Stage lighting by means of high powered lamps and projectors, mainly used to represent moving clouds, etc.

**SCRIM.** Thin canvas used for transparencies.

**SCRIPT.** Manuscript or printed copy of a play used in a production.

**SECTIONS.** Footlights and border lights are usually wired in three circuits to each colour, the circuits being known as sections.

**SET.** A completely arranged scene. To set a scene is to arrange the scenery on the stage in readiness for the performance.

**SET BACK.** Framing for doors and windows for giving the appearance of solidity to these appurtenances.

**SET-PIECE.** Small piece of scenery used within the scene to represent a garden bank, rocks, etc.: any scenery that stands on the stage is a set-piece.

**SHEET.** A plan of the seating used in the box-office for marking off the seats as sold.

**SHOT.** When the edges of the flats are warped and will not properly join, they are planed—or shot—in order to make the joins true.

**SIDE SPACE.** Space on either side of the stage.

**SIDE WING.** Flats placed at an angle at the sides of the stage.

**SIDES.** Pages of an actor's script containing his part and cues. These are typed on half sheets of typewriter-paper, which are called sides.

**SIGHT LINES.** Limits of visibility of the stage from various parts of the front of the house.

**SIGNAL.** Warning by means of bell or light to orchestra or stage hands.

**SILLS.** Strips of iron fixed to bottoms of doors or window frames to keep them rigid.

**SITUATION.** Either the position of the actors on the stage at any particular moment, or the strong point to which the action is projected.

**SKETCH.** Short play of one scene with few characters and one situation.

**SKY CLOTH.** Back curtain representing the sky.

**SLIDERS.** Sections of stage that are movable.

**SOLILOQUY.** Speech spoken by actor who holds the stage alone. A soliloquy is usually "spoken thoughts."

**SNOW BOX.** A square canvas box with perforations through which finely cut paper can drop on to the stage. The box is suspended on lines above the stage and works when gently swayed.

**SOUBRETTE.** Maid servant or similar character, especially with implication of pertness, coquetry, intrigue, etc., in comedy.

**SPACE STAGE.** A method of staging plays with light focused on the actors so that no setting is discernible.

**SPECIALIST LEAD.** Actor who specializes in a certain type of character.

**SPILL.** Effective area of light thrown from a lamp.

**SPOT.** Spot-light. Metal box containing high powered light, lens, and reflector, and groove for holding coloured mediums. Used for directing light upon a particular actor or portion of a scene.

**SPOT LINE.** Block fixed in a position on the grid to enable scenery to be flown out of alignment.

**STAGE.** The entire area behind the proscenium.

**STAGE CLOTH.** Painted canvas to represent pavement, carpet, or, in fact, any floor covering.

**STAGE DIRECTION.** Any remarks inserted in a play to indicate movements or action.

**STAGE DIRECTOR.** Usually known as producer: q.v.

**STAGE DOOR.** The entrance to the theatre used by actors and staff.

**STAGE HANDS.** Men employed in any capacity in the theatre.

**STAGE MANAGER.** The chief executive behind the scenes. He controls everything and is responsible for the performance of a play, the preparation and setting of scenes, lighting, dressing, and everything else. He is also responsible for seeing that the play is kept on the lines intended by the producer.

**STAGE SCREW.** Metal screw of wide thread, and grip, for fixing braces to the flats or floor of the stage.

**STANDARDS.** High powered lights that can be altered in height, used to flood large areas behind the scenes.

**STAND BY.** Direction by the stage manager to stage hands to be prepared to carry out specified work, or to actors to wait at the end of a play.

**STAND-BY TABLE.** Small table off stage where hand props are placed in readiness for use.

**STAR.** Actor or actress playing the leading part in a play. So called because in some theatres the leading man or woman's dressing room is distinguished by a star painted on the door.

**STAR TRAP.** Traps in the stage with lids made in sections that open in the shape of a star. Rarely used except in pantomime.

**STAY.** Piece of wood or metal to keep flats firm when cleated together.

**STILES.** Wooden strips forming the inner framework of a flat.

**STOCK.** Repertory. A stock company is one playing their own stock of plays.

**STOP BLOCK.** Small piece of wood fastened to practical doors to prevent their being opened in the wrong direction.

**STOPPED THE SHOW.** When an actor makes a big personal hit he is said to stop the show.

**STRAIGHT PART.** Part that an actor can play without character make-up.

**STRIKE.** To remove a scene from the stage. When a scene is dismantled it is said to be struck.

**STRINGER.** The boards to which the treads of stairs are fastened.

**STRIPS.** Also called strip lights and lengths. Short lengths of wooden grooved casing with small lights attached for lighting outside doors, windows, etc.

**STRUT.** Wooden brace to support flats: q.v.

**STUDY.** To learn one's part in a play.

**SUB PLOT.** Any secondary or subsidiary plot to the main theme of a play.

**SUPERS.** Stage hands engaged to walk on in crowd scenes. More largely used, the word embraces any supernumerary actor.

**SWALLOW.** Memory. An actor with a good swallow is one who memorizes parts quickly.

**TABS.** The front curtain only lowered at the end of an act or a play.

**TAG.** The last sentence in a play. It is a theatrical superstition that if these words are spoken at rehearsal the play will be a flop.

**TAILS.** Short pieces of canvas hung from the fly rail to prevent sitters in the front rows seeing over the tops of the scenery to the working parts of the stage.

**TAKE A CALL.** When at the end of a play or an act, an actor appears on the stage, or in front of the tabs, in response to the applause of the audience.

**TAKE THE CORNER.** To move to the right or left hand side of the stage.

**TEMPO.** Time, pace, or rhythm used in acting. Sometimes called timing.

**THEATRE.** Building designed for the performance of stage plays.

**THROW.** The distance at which the rays of a light can be used effectively.

**THROW LINE.** Cord or rope for lashing flats together.

**THROWN AWAY.** To speak part of a speech rapidly or indistinctly because it does not give an actor any acting possibilities.

**THUNDER SHEET.** Long strip of sheet iron hung from the flies. When shaken or struck it resembles the sound of thunder.

**TIME SHEET.** List kept by the stage manager giving the playing time of each scene, and act, the intervals, and the total time taken by the performance.

**TOGGLE RAILS.** The battens inserted in the middle of scenery frames to take the strain from the canvas.

**TORMENTOR.** Flats or curtains on either side of the proscenium to mask the actors after their exits and to hide the prompter and the lighting effects down stage.

**TOUR.** A company taking a play to provincial towns is on tour or on the road.

**TRANSPARENCY.** A painted cloth that can be illuminated from behind.

**TRAPS.** Small movable parts of the stage through which persons or articles can be lowered or raised.

**TREADS.** Portion of stairs on which the foot treads.

**TRICK LINE.** Strong black string used to pull things off the stage or to move hinged scenery for quick change effects.

**TRUCK.** Low platform on castors used for moving heavy portions of a set.

**TRY BACK.** Direction at rehearsal to repeat scene or part of a scene.

**TRY OUT.** To try out a play is to produce it in a provincial theatre before West-end presentation. Sometimes referred to as "trying-it-on-the-dog."

**TUMBLE.** In theatres where the height above the stage does not permit of a flat being hauled up straight, it is tumbled, i.e. two sets of lines are used to raise the top and bottom of the flat simultaneously, thus folding it in two. The up-right wooden frames of the flat are hinged half-way up and a batten is used at the fold to prevent creasing. In some theatres, the fireproof has to be dropped in two or three sections that overlap.

**TUMBLER.** Thin batten round which cloths are rolled when being stored.

**TURN OVER.** To go through a pack of flats to ascertain either their condition or the subjects painted on them.

**TYERS.** Thin strips of canvas used to fasten rolled cloths when not in use.

**TYPE.** Actors who specialize in well-defined parts are said to play to type.

**UNDERSTUDY.** Actor appointed to rehearse and study a part and to play it if for any reason the regular actor of it cannot appear.

**UNITIES.** The dramatic unities are derived from Aristotle's *Poetics*, though the French Classicists are responsible for their present concrete form. They are defined as the unities of place, time, and action. The first holds that the dramatic scene shall not be changed essentially during the course of the play; the second, that the events shall occur within the space of twenty-four hours; and the third, that all the incidents and speeches shall be subordinated to the main argument.

**UP STAGE.** Any portion on the stage beyond six feet from the footlights, or, alternatively, all movements towards the back of the stage.

**UPRIGHTS.** Perpendicular posts at each corner of a fit-up frame.

**VALANCE.** Pelmet placed at the top of the proscenium arch or at the tops of windows to cover curtain poles, etc.

**VAMPS.** Doors cut in a flat and fitted with springs for an actor to jump through. In the cinema world, a "vamp" is what in melodrama days was called an adventuress.

**VENTILATOR.** A play or performance that empties the house.

**VISION CLOTH.** Cloth with small portion cut

out. The aperture is covered with gauze through which when illuminated a character standing behind it is visible to the audience, giving a vision effect.

**WALK ON.** To take a part in a play without having any lines to speak.

**WARDROBE.** The collection of costumes used in a particular play.

**WARNING.** Signal by light or bell to the stage hands to be prepared to change scenes or lower curtain. When the word "warning" is used instead of bell or light, it is followed by the word "go."

**WELL FIRMED.** To know one's part.

**WINCH.** Apparatus for raising or lowering the tabs.

**WIND MACHINE.** Ribbed wooden drum mounted on a metal spindle with handle and supported on a wooden stand. When rotated against a piece of stretched canvas, the effect is similar to the sound of wind.

**WING IT.** Said of an actor who learns his part while waiting in the wings to go on.

**WING MEN.** Stage hands who attend to the wings.

**WING NUT.** Nut provided with flanges so that it can be turned by the fingers.

**WINGS.** Pointed flats used as scenery set at an angle on each side of the stage with spaces between for entrances and exits. Wings are rarely used now that the box set is so universal.

The sides of the stage outside the acting area are still called wings.

**WOOD BORDERS.** Borders painted to look like branches and foliage.

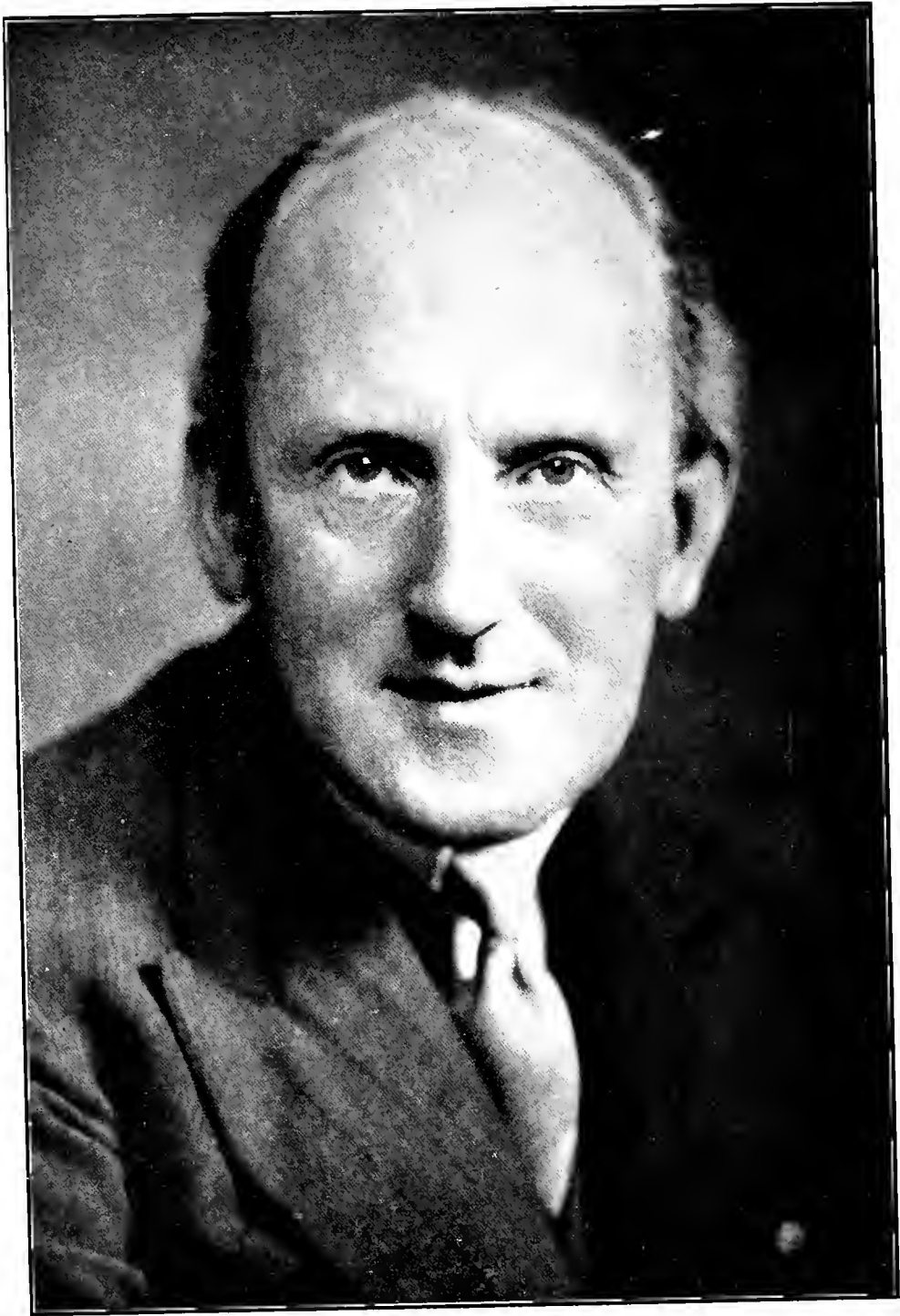
**WOOD WINGS.** Flats painted to represent trees and used at the sides of the stage. Part only of these flats are visible to the audience.

**WORKING AREA.** The parts of the stage where are the stage hands.

**WORKING LIGHT.** A light independent of the stage lighting system used to enable the stage hands to see to do their work.







MR. WILLIAM ARMSTRONG

(2477)

Fr.

# THE PLAY'S THE THING

By WILLIAM ARMSTRONG

IF every amateur dramatic society would accept Hamlet's immortal words as its motto and, when choosing a play for production, remember their significance, then amateur dramatic art in this country would become vitalized to an extraordinary extent. That the amateur can play an important part in improving the standard of theatrical taste is undeniable and the phenomenal progress of the Amateur Movement has been one of the most encouraging signs in the world of the theatre. Acting, production, and scenic design have reached an unusually high standard, but, generally speaking, the minimum of courage and wisdom seems to be given to the all important thing, namely, the choice of the play itself.

That the right play is difficult to find I would be the first to admit, but judging by many of the plays performed by amateurs it is evident that the worth or quality of the play chosen was the least important consideration. When I hear that this or that society is doing a certain play I ask myself "Why that play of all plays?" until I remember that the cast contains at least thirty characters, few of them below the rank of a Baronet, and, as the society in mind has many acting members, it is proverbial that the greater the number of these able to exhibit their talents to admiring relatives then the greater will be the sale of tickets . . . no matter how trivial the play's quality may be. Another club spends its energies and its far from meagre funds in producing a play that has been done by at least half a dozen local societies, thus betraying a complete lack of initiative or originality. A third will attempt nothing that is not labelled "Well-known London Success," pat itself on the back at its choice, but be quite indifferent to the fact that the play chosen has been toured *ad nauseam* by professional companies with all their advantages of technical experience.

Fortunately there are many societies that prove by their judgment that with them "the play's the thing" every time. With commendable unobtrusiveness and little spectacular publicity they do consistently good work, attempt little known

plays by lesser known dramatists, and in many instances have players happily content to remain anonymous. Unlike many of the richer societies, which deserve the epithet or, if you will, the epitaph "mutual admiration societies," they have no opulent membership, but although funds are scanty they possess something of greater value . . . a fine courage and a sincere love for acting plays that are worth acting. To all such adventurers I would like to say: "Thank you. All good luck to your efforts."

Judging by the fact that the great majority of plays performed by amateurs are of a comedy or farcical nature, it seems as if the serious play is looked upon with disapproval and dubbed "bad for the box-office." Why should this be? I know that the first function of a theatre, amateur as well as professional, is to entertain, and an audience is quite justified in demanding entertainment. But need the word be synonymous with imbecility? I do not think so. Life is a puzzling business these days for everybody, and there is no finer "escape" from its perplexities than a genuine first-rate comedy with its tonic of laughter. But there is an equally good "escape" in a serious play that grips the emotions and stirs the imagination. The ridiculous unreal farces that make up the staple fare of so many societies often fill me with suicidal tendencies while a fine play of dramatic intensity always stimulates and thrills me. Do not imagine that I advocate a serious play that is shrouded in morbid gloom or, what is worse, a play with "a high educational purpose" . . . plays of this nature would deservedly bankrupt any society attempting them.

Remember that a good serious play can be carried to success more easily than a comedy. To quote Marie Tempest, our greatest exponent in the art of comedy, "The acting of comedy calls for a higher intelligence. The written tragedy already has action, emotion, and situations to hold the audience. In comedy every moment is fraught with risks, every word has its duty." As for farce, the choice of nine out of ten societies,

it is, in my opinion, the most difficult type of play for amateurs to perform. Usually written round the personality of a "star" with a genius for farcical acting, it also demands from its performers a superb slickness and pace, together with the most perfect "team work" procurable. And these assets are rare in amateur acting. Yet



THE FINAL SCENE IN PHILIP JOHNSON'S ONE-ACT PLAY "LEGEND"

Performed by the Liverpool Playhouse Circle in the British Drama League Competition Festival, 1927-28. "Legend" was awarded the prize for the best original one-act play in the Festival

it is farce, and more than likely a very poor one, which is the most popular of all play forms with many societies. A bad farce badly played is hardly fair to an audience, which has infinitely greater intelligence than it is given credit for, an audience which would rather be caught up in the thrill of a serious play than be depressed by the imbecilities of a poor farce with its "ever opening doors." If you wish to test my theory, listen to the expression of appreciation at the end of any performance. You will notice as the sequel to an evening of continuous laughter that there is only desultory applause. A good play, with a definite

purpose, on the other hand, seldom fails to arouse an exciting enthusiasm from its audience.

Another type of play dearly beloved by amateurs is from "the cocktail school" of drama, with its glittering and shallow artifice and its assembly of worthless people. This is too often produced by a society with players who have little or no knowledge of the world that the dramatist depicts. The results at times are ludicrous. These comedies require a high degree of distinction and sophistication, not only in the acting but in the settings and general atmosphere. Again, it should be noted that a badly written or poorly constructed play, no matter how successful it may have been in London, with its galaxy of stars, is extremely difficult to produce and act. Without its star artists the play rests entirely on its own merits as a play and more than likely will be a dismal failure in amateur hands.

Again, unless you have a large and well equipped stage, resist plays that require heavy realistic settings or plays with many changes of scene. Long intervals are a glaring fault in many amateur productions and can mar an otherwise successful evening to a pathetic extent, especially in these days with the lightning rapidity of the cinema.

It is a curious thing that the one-act play has found little favour with the amateur except in the British Drama League Festivals, which have proved that innumerable excellent one-act plays are being written by new authors all over the country. Many volumes of admirable one-act plays are now published and the choice of good one-acters is unlimited. Why not instead of doing hackneyed long plays try an evening of three or four one-act plays? If the prospect frightens your Box Office Manager, play for safety with a Barrie, Shaw, Milne, or Brighouse, and one or two by a new author. If your society has many acting members twenty or thirty of them could be absorbed in the casts of the plays. Instead of one producer two or three could have a chance of proving their worth. Contrast the plays carefully and include one or more of a serious nature. Vernon Sylvaine's *The Road of Poplars* is worth every consideration. It took first place in the 1933 British Drama League Festival, and as it is a serious play with a fine tragic intensity and deals with the War it goes to prove what I said about

the demand for good stuff. Other plays I can safely recommend are Donald Carswell's *Count Albany*, Philip Johnson's *Legend*, and a delightful play with a blend of comedy and pathos, *Doctor My Book*, by Rudolph de Cordova and Alicia

Another way in which the amateur can perform a real service to dramatic art is to give the new and untried dramatist a muchly needed chance. Judging by the avalanche of manuscripts that pour into the offices of theatrical managers,



A SCENE FROM SIERRA'S PLAY "THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

Produced at the Liverpool Repertory Theatre by William Armstrong on 30th March, 1933

Ramsey. But if you decide to do "A Triple Bill" of one-act plays, be prepared for many questions as to the author of such a play. This happened when I contemplated producing "A Triple Bill" at the Liverpool Playhouse some years ago. Why not an exciting evening of international one-act plays? From America you can choose a Susan Glaspell or a Eugene O'Neill, from Spain a Martinez Sierra or a Quintero, from Russia a Chekhov, from Ireland a Lady Gregory or a Lennox Robinson, and so on indefinitely.

half the population of Britain seems to indulge in the fascinating adventure of play-writing. The majority of these plays, if performed, would drive even the most uncritical audiences to the safety of the cinema or even the cemetery, but many of them are excellent and quite worthy of production. But the professional theatre, handicapped as it is with heavy weekly running expenses, cannot, alas, run too many risks or experiment as much as it would like. Here then, is where amateur dramatic societies could prove of

inestimable value to the theatre in general. They are confident of an audience to a sufficient extent to make experiments a possibility. There must be many local dramatists with a good play awaiting production. Why not give him or her the eagerly awaited chance of seeing the play come to life on your stage? Or will you be content to go on in the old smug way, ignoring the budding dramatist, the serious playwright, the maker of one-act plays, and keep to the safe and easy track of

"famous London success"? Don't. We of the muchly tried professional theatre welcome this marvellous and ever increasing enthusiasm for amateur acting that is spreading all over the land. The amateur can do immense service in furthering all that is best in theatrical art, free as he is from the burdens that cripple the commercial theatre. He can act, produce, design . . . let him but add to these gifts courage and judgment in his choice of play and all will be well.

*William Andrew Aron*

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# THE VALUE OF THE SETTING

By HAL D. STEWART

Author of "Rizzio's Boots," "The Blind Eye," etc.

A GOOD picture deserves a decent frame. Good acting demands an appropriate setting. I give two examples of interior sets used at the Liverpool Repertory Company's theatre—the Playhouse, Liverpool. The first was designed for *Donna Clara* (the Quintero Brothers) by William Armstrong, who produced the play.

Notice how the flats all join perfectly, how the ceiling rests snugly on the top of the flats, and how the design is carried out as a whole, so that the ornamental door in the back wall, the tapestry hanging on the left, the steps, the window with the verandah and sun blind, and the furniture, all blend. There is evidence of the same care in the second illustration, which is the set used in *By Candlelight*, and which was designed by R. Pearce S. Hubbard.

This was not achieved without the expenditure of much thought and energy, and it is safe to say that had this trouble not been taken the plays as a whole would have left a much less satisfactory impression on the mind of the audience than was the case.

The amateur too often leaves the choice of set to the tender mercies of a purveyor of costumes and scenery. The inexperienced have a touching faith in such firms—a faith that is too often misplaced. But while it is true that hiring firms seldom take much interest in the artistic success of a production, they are rarely supplied with sufficient information to enable them to do so. It is no exaggeration to say that a bald statement regarding the number of doors and windows required, and the fact that the scene is interior or exterior, is often all the information that such a firm is given. In these circumstances it is unreasonable for a producer to expect that he will get what he wants—if he even has a clear idea of this himself, which is not always the case.

As a rule, it is quite possible to hire suitable scenery, but it is necessary to go to a good deal of trouble to ensure that the set, properties, and furniture that are hired, are the best obtainable.

The remedy for this state of affairs is simple.

Appoint someone to act as designer for the production, and make him, or her, responsible not only for designing the sets, costumes, etc., but for seeing that the design is carried out.

Many art schools flourish throughout the country, and it may be assumed that some of the students who attend these schools are interested in the theatre, and would be glad of the opportunity that it offers for experiment in design. Amateur dramatic societies in Great Britain are numbered in thousands, but few art students ever receive the opportunity that an amateur dramatic society might give them.

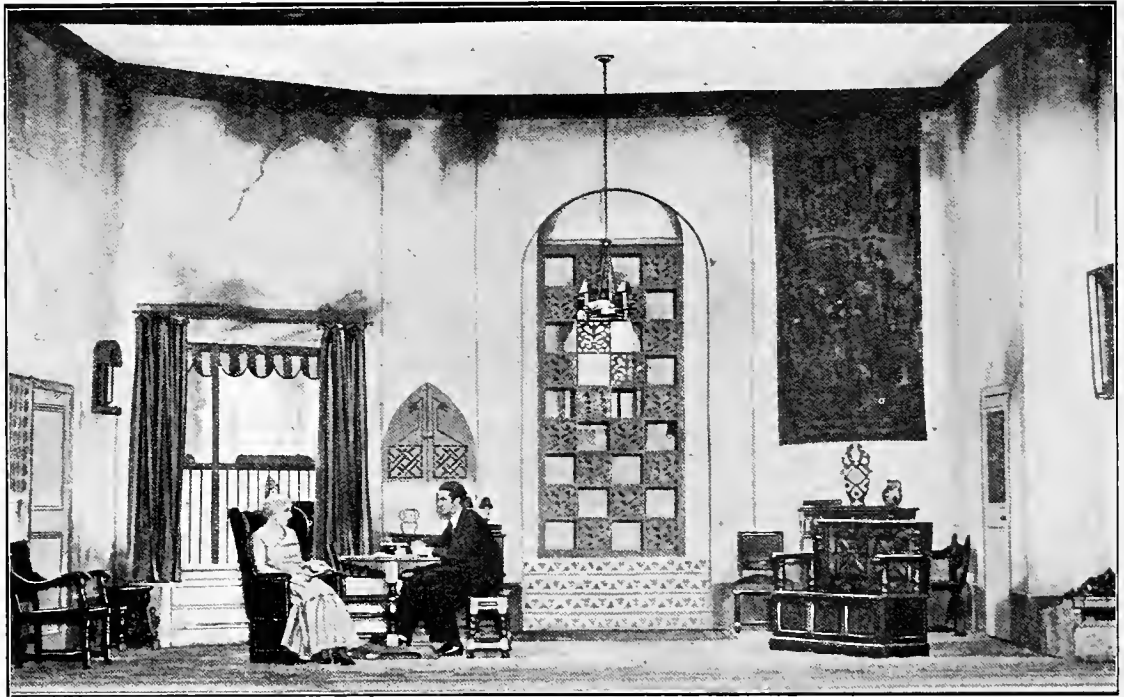
There are several reasons why this is so. In the first place, there is the difficulty of the student getting in touch with the dramatic group. Secondly, many amateur societies are afraid to build their own scenery because of the expense that is involved. And thirdly, many societies are ignorant of, or indifferent to, the advantages that they would derive from a proper attention to *décor*.

The first of these difficulties may ultimately be met by the increasing organization of the amateur stage. Bodies like the British Drama League and the Scottish Community Drama Association are constantly working for a closer co-operation of societies, and through such bodies every amateur enthusiast in the theatre may one day find his niche.

The second difficulty is real. It is generally more expensive in the first instance to buy or to make scenery than it is to hire it. But only in the first instance. It would definitely not be worth while for a mushroom club, which exists for a season and is then disbanded, to spend money on the acquisition of expensive scenery and properties. On the other hand, a society that is playing regularly may well find that in the long run it saves a considerable sum by having workshops of its own. Moreover, the services of a designer may be most usefully employed, although no new scenery is being built. He can search the scenery stores for the most appropriate sets, and can carry out a homogeneous design although material is hired, and not specially constructed.

The third difficulty is probably the most serious, but fortunately it is decreasing. Summer schools of drama, lectures, and classes, and the work of many repertory companies, are combining to increase the interest that the amateur takes in this side of his work, although it is still

For instance, movements that are correct and natural for an orthodox production of *Hamlet* may be ridiculous for a production of the same play in modern dress. Therefore, it follows that sets should be designed, and the general colour and lighting scheme arranged before rehearsals start—



*Photo by courtesy of William Armstrong*

SETTING FOR "DONNA CLARINES," BY THE QUINTERO BROTHERS

*Produced at The Playhouse, Liverpool, by William Armstrong, who also designed the set*

the aspect of the theatre where he falls notably short of professional standards.

The design of a production must be studied seriously from the beginning. It may be evolved by the producer himself. It may be evolved by the society's designer—perhaps an art student—or it may be evolved by the two together. But the production, from the point of view of design, must be considered as a whole, and if the producer has no hand in it, it must obviously be subject to his veto. No competent producer will work with scenery or costumes of which he disapproves. It is important that he should bear in mind the design of sets, the costumes, and the colour scheme, from the beginning of his work on the production. The reasons for this are obvious.

even before the producer starts to work on the script.

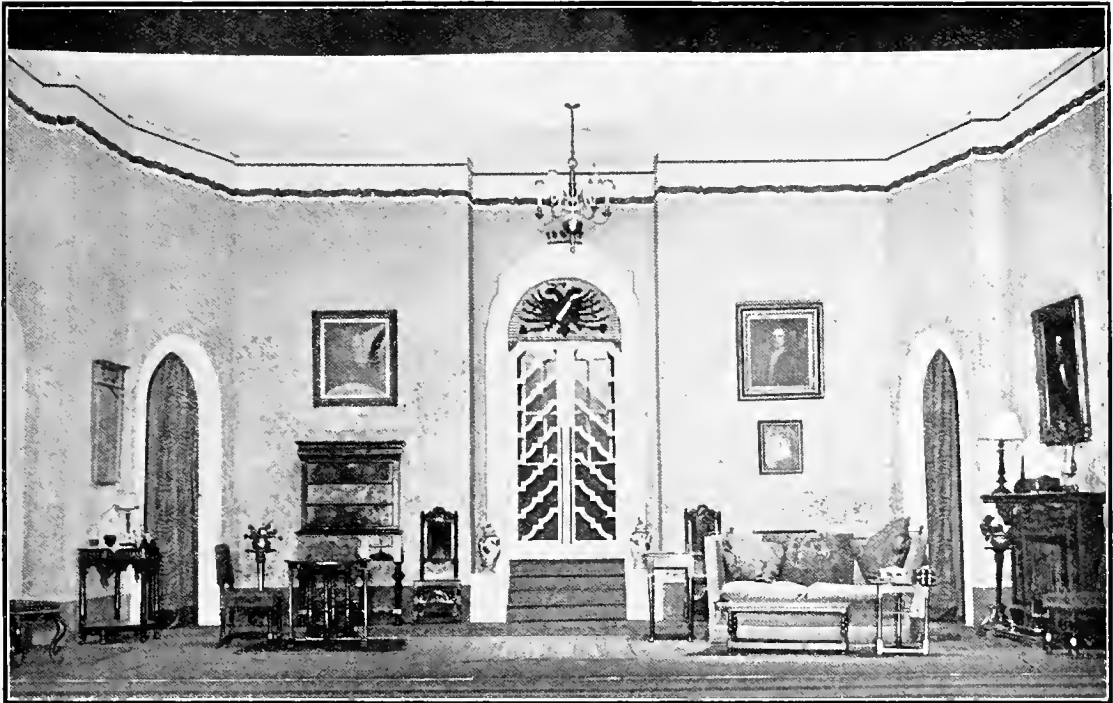
The first thing to be borne in mind when designing a stage setting is that its function is to help the producer and actors to interpret correctly the author's ideas. The setting is the background against which the play takes place. The importance of this background varies according to the nature of the play, but the fact that it *is* a background must never be forgotten. There is a danger that a keen designer who takes a great interest in his work may in his own mind regard the setting as the most important feature of the production. Should this be the case, he must never allow this opinion to become apparent, or it may ruin the production by causing the audience



to pay too much attention to the scenery and too little to the action. The design then becomes not a help but a hindrance, and the general effect is marred. The designer must, therefore, learn at the outset that while his role is important, it is not paramount, and that over-obtrusive scenery may spoil a production.

To preserve balance and to avoid this error, the

There is no play that cannot be helped by intelligent design. Often the designer will get no public credit for his work. The theatre-going public is, on the whole, lamentably unintelligent and ignorant of the most elementary details of theatrical technique. If the design is unobtrusive the audience will probably take little conscious notice of it, but if it is successful it will contribute



*Photo by courtesy of William Armstrong*

SETTING FOR "BY CANDLELIGHT," BY HARRY GRAHAM, FROM THE GERMAN OF SIEGFRIED GEYER

*Produced at The Playhouse, Liverpool, by William Armstrong. The set designed by R. Pearce S. Hubbard*

designer must fully realize the spirit of the play. He must read the play, not once, but many times, so as to be completely conversant with it; and he must discuss it with the producer. It is unusual for the author's intentions to be so clear that two people will interpret them in exactly the same way. Therefore this consultation between the producer and the designer is essential so that the latter may learn what lines the production will follow and what fundamental points are to be stressed. These may conflict with his own ideas. Should this be the case, it must be remembered that the producer is an autocrat and has the final word in any argument.

materially to appreciation of the whole production. With this knowledge the designer will have to be content.

Some plays are called "producer's plays," because they afford the producer ample scope for imagination and originality. Such plays, as a rule, afford ample opportunities to the designer also. But there are other plays, which are commoner, especially with amateurs, where at first sight it may not seem possible for the design to play more than an unimportant part, but where, as a matter of fact, it may have a considerable bearing on the ultimate result.

Take, for instance, a play that depicts the life

of an ordinary middle-class family, where the action takes place in the living room. A middle-class living room may not appear to afford any opportunities to the designer. Vivid effects with primary colours would be out of place. Yet it is possible to make such a set both interesting and attractive, to design walls, hangings, and furniture, so that whenever the curtain rises the audience is immediately aware of the class of society to which the inhabitants of the room belong. The advantage of this to the actor is obvious, and whatever type of play he is handling it is the effect at which the designer must always aim.

The design of a production must be considered as a whole. Setting, hangings, furniture, properties, and costumes must blend into one pattern. In one London production, I noticed a set of particularly attractive design. Back centre, there was a large scarlet bureau that was extremely effective. The effect was lessened, however, by a scarlet cushion, down right, and finally, in my opinion, marred by the appearance of first one and then another actress in scarlet. This was a case where it seemed that the set had been designed first, and the impression was spoiled because the costumes did not conform to the design.

I saw this play on tour, before its production in the West End, and in all probability matters were adjusted before the company opened in London. The play was modern and the costumes were of the present day. In such a case the designer for an amateur company has to contend with a real difficulty. Amateurs usually provide their own costumes when these are modern, and it is often out of the question for actresses to provide new dresses. At the same time, it is almost always possible by judicious borrowing to find a costume that will conform to the designer's ideas, and if new dresses are being procured, the necessity that they must conform to the general design must be impressed on the wearer. Actresses are usually more concerned that their clothes should enhance their personal charms than that they should carry out any particular scheme of *décor*. When this is the case it is necessary to take a firm stand.

Period costumes present different problems. When these are being made, designs for all the

costumes should first be drawn, and when the costumes are being designed the general colour scheme of the sets and the producer's probable grouping must be remembered. Similarly, when costumes are being hired, they must be of a colour and design that will fit in with the general scheme.

All that I have said about costume applies equally to properties and furniture. A grand piano, however decorative, would be out of place in a kitchen. Blatant examples of inappropriate furniture occur regularly in amateur productions. These would always have been avoided by a little trouble and a little thought.

Furniture may be either hired or borrowed. It is usually possible to borrow the furniture necessary for a modern play from members of the cast and their friends, but it is essential that the designer should *see* himself the articles that are being provided, and not rely on a description of them. Descriptions are usually vague, and often inaccurate. Unless the furniture has been seen it may be found to be quite unsuitable when it arrives at the theatre on the day of the dress rehearsal. This will mean a hurried, last minute search for what is required, and the result will probably be a makeshift; whereas the desired article might easily have been procured if the inquiries had been made more carefully in the first instance.

The furniture should be accurately measured. Do not rely on your eye to estimate the size of a sofa. It may look much larger, or smaller, when transplanted from its accustomed surroundings to your stage.

If you are unable to borrow the furniture you require from private individuals, you may be able to do so from a warehouse in exchange for an acknowledgment in the programme.

Remember, too, that odd pieces of furniture may often be made for the occasion without much difficulty. Do not hesitate to design some curiously shaped and brightly coloured stool for an ultra-modern set. A handyman may possibly be able to make it from a few old soap boxes.

Success in stage design depends to a great extent on common sense and good taste. The average man or woman, if he or she will give the matter thought and energy, can produce attractive settings with appropriate costumes and furniture.

The time and energy will not be wasted.

## THE PRODUCER'S STATUS

By F. E. DORAN

*Secretary, Manchester Playgoers' Club*

THE status of the producer is one that has given rise to much controversy in the course of this century. Roughly speaking, the latter part of the last century and a few years after saw the actor-manager as sole arbiter in the theatre, the Shakespearean productions of Irving and Tree, the social dramas of George Alexander, the melodramas of Wilson Barrett being examples of the actor's controlling influence. The actor was the be-all and end-all (and end-all it nearly was) of the stage. The producer was absolutely unknown. There were people called stage "managers," and there were "coaches." Occasionally somebody would "present" a play, but the producer was a phenomenon to come. It is difficult to assign any definite direction from which the idea came, but Gordon Craig, at work in his Goldoni Teatro in Italy, had something to do with it, and Huntley Carter with his book *The New Spirit in the Theatre* gave the idea an airing. It was evident that the social theatre of the Ibsenites wanted more than acting and a collection of properties and scenery. The mood of a play had to be expressed, and with the impact of the Russian Drama, this feeling for mood was intensified. The old Crummles methods of acting, the old catalogue notice of properties, was worse than inadequate, and quite early, soon after the Boer War, the new spirit began to manifest itself. The repertory theatres at Glasgow and Manchester, the Abbey Theatre at Dublin, and soon the well-established pioneer amateur societies like the Stockport Garrick, got hold of the idea and gave it open expression.

I should say that Granville Barker's two Savoy productions of Shakespeare forced the principle home, though Bernard Shaw, with his elaborate stage directions, had something to do with paddling the producer's canoe. Books of plays appeared with minute instructions of details of settings, size and position of furniture, colours and patterns of wall-papers, characteristics of photographs, and so on, all with the notion of

giving first aid to the new producer, as yet on rather slippery ground, uncertain who was friend or enemy, the actor or the author. But the principle of unified control was maintained, and by about 1908 or so, and certainly by 1912, So and So's production of "Such and Such" was general comment. But the producer was still suspect, and the older school of thought objected to the demand for the dictatorship of the producer over the actor. The actor's idea of histrionic expression dominating the idea in the play and the forceful technique of the transpontine school were soon found to be at loggerheads with team work, and it was not long before the author took a hand in the game and began to support the producer.

Enlightened public taste, the divorce of the dramatist from limelight notions, and the improvement of stage apparatus soon forced the producer to the fore, and by the time the War had finished, and the new youth brought a serious mind into the theatre, the producer had thoroughly established himself in the hierarchy of functionalists, and the field was definitely clear for full recognition of the producer as the captain of the ship. The actor became a member of the team, and in theory at least each part was as important as another, each dovetailing into the scheme as a whole according to the pattern devised by the producer.

The status and function of the producer is now clear, justified by expediency and proved in practice. Few modern plays of consequence rely on the transpontine technique. When it does appear it is secondary and very much a means to a primary end. While maintaining that, in the nature of things, a second-rate play will be carried off by first-rate acting, good production of a first-class play will bring out high qualities in actors not of the first flight. It is imperative, therefore, that the producer should know his job, and that his team should give him the leadership, and recognize his status as O.C.

The producer must have a competent staff of supporters and helpers regardless of the acting cast.

The cast and assistants should be informed, individually and clearly, of the work expected from them. It is not enough to tell the costumier or wardrobe mistress to provide so many medieval costumes, and the scenery department to provide a wood. The details must also be indicated, if possible by sketch design, with colour and wood marked out. The property man must also be provided with details of size and shape and the lighting plot evolved. When these and other departmental details are scheduled, these sections can get to work with a minimum of last-minute rush.

It must be remembered by the team, and a wise producer will support the thesis, that fine detail is for the department, broad principles for the producer.

So far as the cast is concerned they must add that individual something that cannot be described or defined. Call it personality or art, what you will, but there is a personal contribution which no producer can command but which may be evoked. A cookery book can give the recipe to the last grain of salt and half a degree of temperature. This may be meticulously carried through, but two persons will produce two different dinners, probably poles apart. Acting is more than memorizing words, wearing costume, and disguising with make-up. These are merely the outward signs of the inward spirit that only the actor can provide. That is the genius, or creativeness, of the actor-artist. It is built on technique and training; observation and study of the part and the words. Inflections can alter the whole meaning of a line, and a wrong emphasis can ruin the finest finale ever written.

Take this short dialogue and test out its many variations—

*He.* "I love you."

*She.* "Why?"

*He.* "I don't know."

These seven words can be presented in so many ways, whimsical, tragic, sad, humorous, wildly comic, and many other ways. There is a whole orchestration of vocal intensity and human feeling in this short dialogue. A few experiments with it will illustrate the meaning and importance of the preceding comments on the actor's contribution.

Always remember the three A's and their relation to each other, the Author, the Actor, and the Audience—the trinity of the theatre.

It is this trinity that the producer must orchestrate. The audience passive, negative, receptive. The author the primary cause: his work done, its powers latent in the script, dormant until the spirit of life is breathed into it by the breath of the actor. The actor the potent power, the dynamic principle to be applied to the passivity of the audience and the potentiality of the audience. The producer standing with his hand on the lever, controlling all these influences, emphasizing here, subduing there, modulating this or the other, bringing all the elements into one single control and unity of purpose.

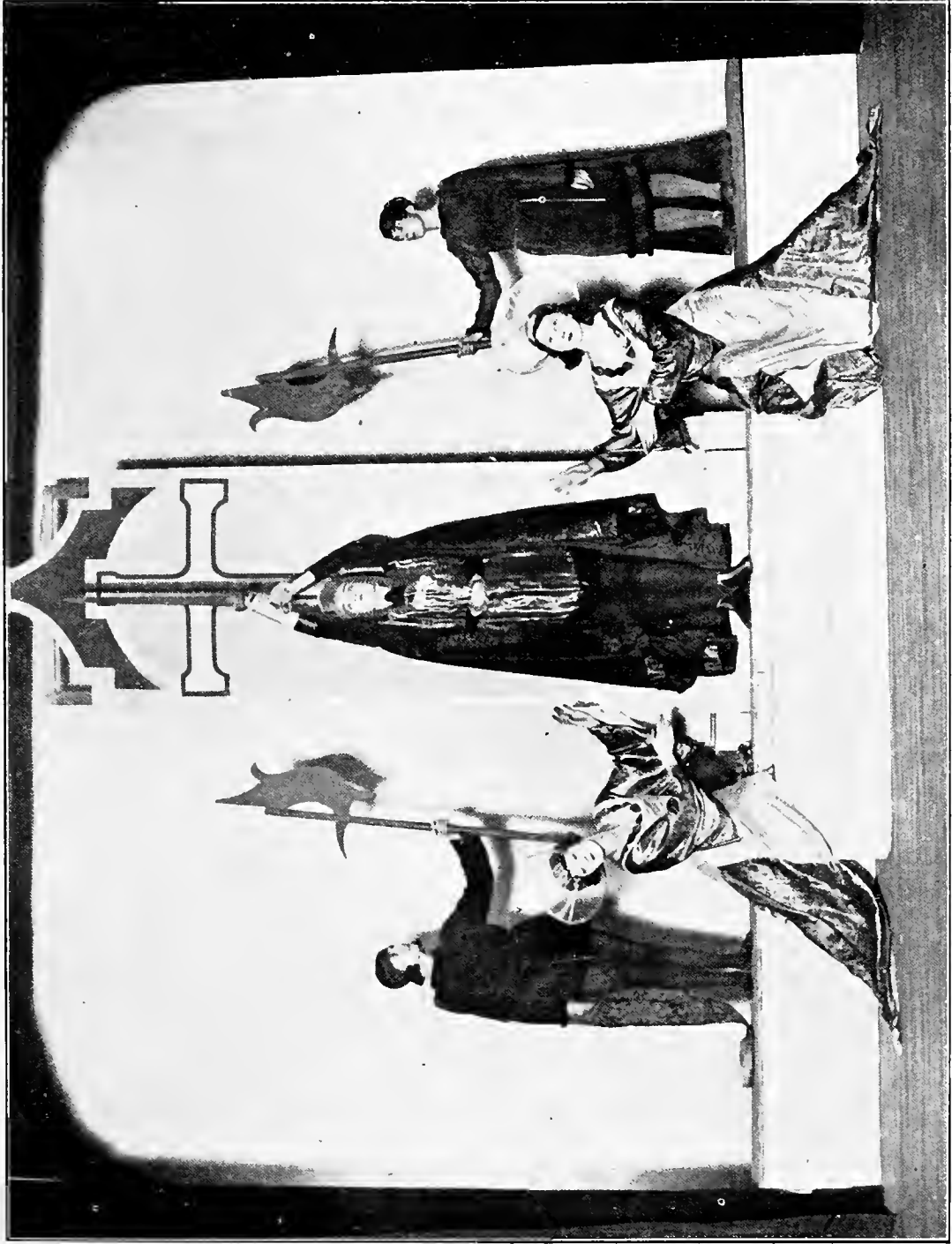
The status of producer is essentially one of control. He is indeed the Autocrat of the Theatre, unto whom all things shall be subservient. Which is all very fine and large but not so easy as it sounds. For the producer must also justify his autocracy by knowing what he is doing. While producers like Harley Granville-Barker may be born, they must also be made, and the making is a tortuous process implying study of many things if the autocrat of the theatre is to be listened to with respect. Blind and unreasoning theory is no good because it is not based on certain known factors which are essential.

It is true that in the realm of artistic adventure the mind and spirit of man may be free, but there are artistic twos which must always make fours. This mathematics of production must be learnt, and when learnt the cast will be ready and willing to sit at the producer's feet and co-operate willingly in producing the pattern in the producer's mind.

We have only to examine the lives of Reinhardt, Craig, and Granville-Barker to see the terrific training they have gone through before they were able to experiment.

In the lighter realms of musical comedy and revue, a high degree of imaginative skill is demanded of a producer if the often tenuous elements of his script are to be acceptable to the audience. He must have a wide knowledge of dance, rhythm, colour, light, and mass emotion, in addition to the basic principles of the actor's craft.

It must be remembered that while the audience



"THE COMING OF CHRIST," BY JOHN MASEFIELD, AS PRODUCED BY THE EVERYMAN PLAYERS AT THE EVERYMAN THEATRE, HAMPTSTEAD

may be a passive element, it is also a critical element, in so far as it has an instinct for critical and comparative reaction which at once responds to the work seen on the stage. It is this frame of mind that the producer must attack. He has to marshal his actors, his dialogue, his costume, his colour and all the other elements into a formation that advances by irresistible stages through the emotions of the audience and leaves behind some ever-abiding recollection.

If his marshalling is bad or inefficient the recollection will be either of a bad occasion or soon forgotten, but if the marshalling is directed effectively, with understanding and control, the abiding recollection will be of something outstanding which was also a great experience.

The producer is entirely responsible for the change in presentation during the last thirty years, from the full realistic, heavily lime-lit settings of the beginning of the century to the simplified and sometimes stark settings of the extreme moderns. Compare the trees with real apples, the forests

with real goats and waterfalls in the Shakespearean revivals of the Boer War period to the curtain and rostrum effects of to-day.

I am not concerned here to express an opinion on the merits of the differences between the two forms of production. I am concerned, at this moment, in drawing attention to the difference, and in pointing out that it is the producer as autocrat who is responsible.

The producer found that certain effects and emotional control were just as effectively produced, in some instances more so, by cutting away all the dead wood of representation and found that a reliance on pure suggestion by abstract forms could be just as good. But the producer had to know what he was doing and experiment with these new forms with knowledge.

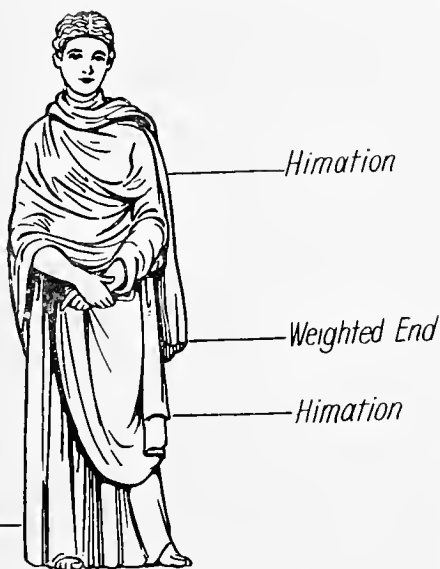
The result has been that the producer has definitely established himself in the status of one in control, and he claims authority over the three A's: the Author, the Actor, and the Audience.

## THE GREEKS

By NEVIL TRUMAN

*Hon. Secretary Nottingham Playgoers' Club*

**D**URING the 2,500 years of Greece's power costume varied, and in the earlier period was so scanty as to be useless for stage purposes. The Greeks knew the advantage of sun and air reaching the skin, and their clothes were designed so as to allow for this, and also to give great freedom for athletic exercises—two points that we should do well to imitate to-day. The great Greek dramas of the classical period range from 550 B.C. to 322 B.C. It is this period which will be wanted for theatrical purposes and which is here described.



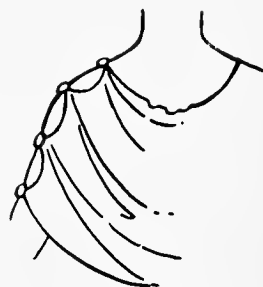
GREEK WOMAN (Indoors)

### DRESS

The *Doric Chiton* (men and women) was a tunic made from a rectangle one foot longer than the wearer's height and of width twice the distance from finger tip to finger tip with arms outstretched. It was made of wool, and the favourite colours were purple, red, saffron, and blue. To adjust it, the extra foot in length was first folded over, then the long rectangle was folded in half

and draped round the body with the fold on the left side. Back and front were caught together with pins at the shoulders, and it was girdled at the waist with a slight overhang there. Thus two loopholes were left at either side for the arms to pass through. The length was shortened by pulling it over the girdle to form a blouse called the *Kolpos*. The arms were left bare. The loose ends at the right side were not fastened together, but were left free for exercise; for theatre purposes these should be stitched together. The overfold may be embroidered with Greek Key and other designs and the loose end (on the right side) should be weighted with beads. This end should fall slightly lower than the overfold edge on the left side.

The *Ionic Chiton* (men and women) was a similar tunic without the overfold at the top, but made of linen or cotton, and larger and fuller, showing more folds. It was also distinguished by having sleeves made by holding the back and front of the chiton together at intervals with small pins at the arm openings. An overfold was sometimes, but rarely, added.



SLEEVE OF IONIC TUNIC

Skirts must not be worn under these tunics, as the limbs must show in outline, and the draping should be done with the greatest care. It was one of the chief duties of the slaves to adjust these beautifully.

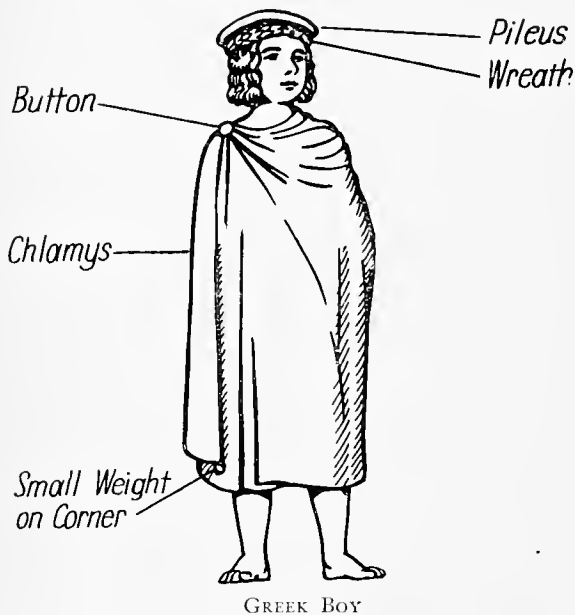
The *Super Tunic* (men and women) reached to the waist and was worn for extra clothing. Generally speaking, the tunics of the men were shorter than those of the women.

The *Pallium* (men) was a large cloak worn by philosophers, who also wore the *Tribon*, a rough cloak of black or brown.

The *Peplum* (men and women) was about

4 yds. long by 2 yds. wide, and was passed twice round the body under the arms. It was then brought up over the shoulders, and secured by closely winding it about the body, or it was pulled over the head. The latter was the case when mourning.

*Girdles* (women) went across the shoulders and breasts diagonally with the Ionic tunic, and round the hips several times. Later, they went round



GREEK BOY

the body, higher than the waist and just below the breasts.

The *Himation* (men and women) was a large rectangle of white wool, draped over the left arm and shoulder, across the back, and under or over the right shoulder. Its weighted end was thrown over the left shoulder or the left forearm.

The *Chlamys* (men) was a small mantle for travelling, riding, and war, fastened by a fibula (pin-brooch) on the right shoulder, or in front. It was made of wool. It covered the left arm, leaving the right arm bare, and was often weighted at all four corners. It was extensively worn by youths. A good size is 5 ft. by 3 ft.

The *Diplois* (women) or doubled mantle was folded at a third of its width and caught up on the right shoulder with a brooch at some distance from the ends, which fell in zig-zag folds. It was wound tightly round the body under the left shoulder.

The *Peplos* (women) was a veil of woollen stuff that could envelop the whole figure if thrown over the head. It was a shawl with an overfold at the top, and was worn, with a girdle, beneath the left arm and fastened with tapes on the right shoulder so that the overfold covers the body to the waist.

The *Strophion* (women) was a kind of corset with three bands—one round the hips, one at the waist line, and one under the bust.

#### LENGTH OF TUNICS

Women wore their tunics to floor level and even below and had to walk with a pushing stride. Old men wore them to their feet, but younger men wore them shorter. The borders of the tunics and the corners of the cloaks were decorated, whilst spots, stars, and birds were often embroidered all over the fabric.

#### FEET

**MEN.** Simple sandals were worn by the men, also shoes of soft ornamented leather, and boots. Boots were high to the middle of the calf, laced up the front, and turned over at the top for the richer folk.

**WOMEN.** Sandals were also worn by the women, and had thick leather soles, ankle straps, and an ornamented piece on the instep. Coloured leather shoes, laced on the instep, were also used.

#### HAIR

**MEN.** The hair was short and curly and curling tongs were used if required, a finish being given by the use of a fillet round the head across the brow. Short beards were the mark of the older men.

**WOMEN.** The women's hair was waved and curled, and dressed in a knot of plaits or curls high above the nape of the neck and projecting well beyond it. It was *always* parted in the middle. Sometimes the hair was placed on a metal frame attached by bands over the head. White (not gold) bands round the hair are allowable, and girls may wear a wreath of flowers.

#### HATS

The *Petasis* (men) was a wide felt hat with a low round crown and ear flaps, to which tying strings were fastened. When not in use, it was borne on the shoulders at the back by the strings.



It was only worn when travelling, and was similar to the medieval pilgrims' or palmers' hats made familiar by the opera *Tannhäuser*. The *Pileus* (men) was a tight fitting cone shaped hat.

The *Himation* (women) served the purpose of a hat when thrown over the head on the rare occasions when women travelled, a fold being



THE PETASUS

PEASANT'S HOOD

carried from the body over the head. The women also wore dazzling veils of white cotton or other (then) expensive material. Actual hats are rare and can be ignored.

#### PEASANTS

The *Tunic* was short and plain with few folds (being scanty) and with short sleeves.

The *Cloak* was a rough oblong for travelling and wet weather.

The *Hood* had a short point, giving a "Gnome" effect, and was made from thick brown felt or cloth. Artisans and crowds can be bareheaded.

The *Carbatina* were of soft leather, put under the foot, but 2 in. wider all round so that the surrounding portions could be drawn up and over the foot by lacing to cover the toes and heel.

*Puttees* were linen straps swathed round the legs like modern puttees, but without the modern thin and regular strip.

#### JEWELLERY

The women wore a great profusion of jewels—combs, pins, hair nets, and brooches, which were ornamented with gold mounts; bracelets of gold or silver; necklaces of beaded fringe on plain bands, armlets, anklets, etc. The Gold Room of the British Museum furnishes many excellent examples of this fine work. The men wore rings and sometimes carried walking sticks.

#### SLAVES

Slaves may be richly dressed, if their owners please, and should have closely cropped hair.

*Courtesans* carried hand mirrors. The Greeks used flame coloured wedding veils, held on by gold fillets in the key design, with a golden girdle, but no wedding ring was worn.

For *Dances*, garlands and wreaths were used, and the colour for funerals was white. In the military dances the men still wore the cuirass, crested helmet, and leg-greaves, made of gold, brass, steel, or tin. Skins of animals, sometimes gilded, were stretched over the cuirass and helmet. The armour should be worn over a short tunic, the greaves over the bare skin. The feet were either bare or sandalled. This armour was definitely old fashioned and retained for ceremonial dancing only. Every Greek was most wisely compelled to dance until he was thirty years old, this being another instance of the wise rules of physical culture then current. In war, bows and arrows were used with spears, and swords were worn under the left armpit. Further light on the costume of the period may be gained at the British Museum—especially the Elgin Marbles.

## SUMMARY

### MEN

#### Dress

Doric Chiton or Tunic.

Ionic Chiton or Tunic.

Super Tunic. Pallium

—a large cloak. Pep-

lum—an outer wrap.

Tribon—Black or

Brown Cloak.

Belt of leather.

Himation—an outdoor cloak.

Chlamys—a short cloak.

#### Hair

Curly and short. Fillet on head. Short beards.

#### Hat

Petasis of wide felt with cords.

Pileus—a tight round cap.



GREEK ARTISAN

*Feet*

Sandals. High-laced boots and soft leather shoes.

*Legs*

Bare.

*Jewels*

Finger rings. Walking sticks. No armlets or anklets.

## WOMEN

*Dress*

Doric Chiton or Tunic with overfold.  
Ionic Chiton or Tunic without overfold, sleeved.

Super Tunic.

Peplum—an outer wrap.

Girdle.

Himation—an outdoor cloak.

Diplois—a doubled mantle.

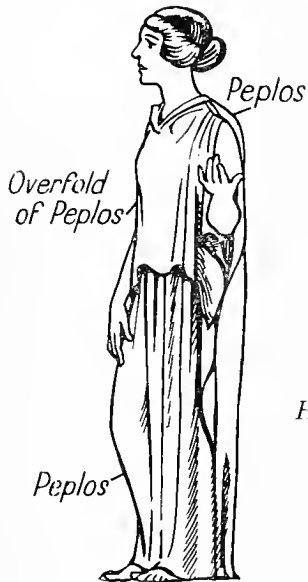
Peplos—a shawl-veil.

Strophion—a corset.

*Hair*

Waved or curled.  
Middle parting.  
White bands round.

Flower wreaths for girls.



GREEK GIRL

*Hat*

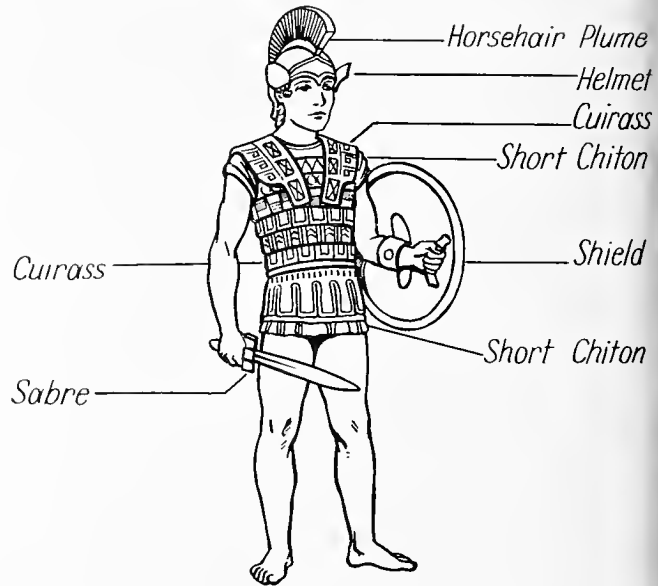
Fold of the Himation.  
White veil.  
Hats very rare.

*Feet*

Sandals. Coloured leather laced shoes.

*Jewels*

Gold and silver mounted bracelets, necklaces, pins, brooches.



SOLDIER

## PEASANTS

*Dress*

Chiton or Tunic, very plain.  
Simple cloak.

*Hair*

Rough and short.

*Hat*

Hood of soft leather.

*Feet*

Carbatina of soft leather.

*Legs*

Linen puttees.

## THE ROMANS

By NEVIL TRUMAN

*Hon. Secretary Nottingham Playgoers' Club*

THE Romans set great store on physical perfection in order to produce as perfect a race as possible for the good of the State, which was pre-eminent in the minds of the nation. Their dress, consequently, was loose and free, and whilst they were rather more fully clad than the Greeks, there was plenty of space allowed for sun and wind to reach the skin. Sports were often indulged in whilst the athletes were naked, and this also applied to the races and other games played during the great annual festival of the Saturnalia. The Romans, as the conquerors of the then known world, had great dignity and sense of power, and this was reflected in the lines of their dresses, which were flowing, dignified, and of full length. They had elaborate sumptuary rules—as to what colour and decoration might be worn by particular classes of people. The classes were clearly marked, being divided into the court circle of Patricians (the Nobles), the Government Officials, such as Senators, Magistrates, and Priests, and the Common People. In addition there were the military, by whom the people set much store, and the gladiators, who were the public entertainers, who, though they might be popular, were an unfortunate class, being doomed to early decease.

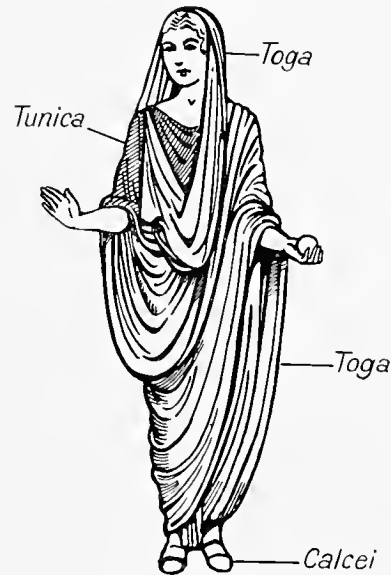
The Roman Republic began in 509 B.C. and became an Empire in 31 B.C. It collapsed in A.D. 324 when Constantine the Great transferred his capital to Byzantium, which he renamed Constantinople, and the Sack of Rome put the finishing touch to this epoch. Cicero and Caesar flourished from 106 B.C. to 44 B.C. and it is this time that will be mostly in demand for stage purposes.

### DRESS

The principal dress for men was the Tunic and for women it was the Stola.

The *Tunic* (men). The Tunic can be seen to-day, scarcely altered from Roman days, in the Dalmatic worn by the deacon at High Mass. It was of wool, in its natural yellowish shade, but

later sumptuary laws allowed colour. Its length was a matter of taste, but those who wore it to the feet with sleeves to the wrist were thought effeminate. Two pieces of material were sewn together at the sides and top to form a shirt with short sleeves. Normally it reached to the calf, or half way down the thigh. It was drawn up under a girdle, at option. The *Tunica Palmata*

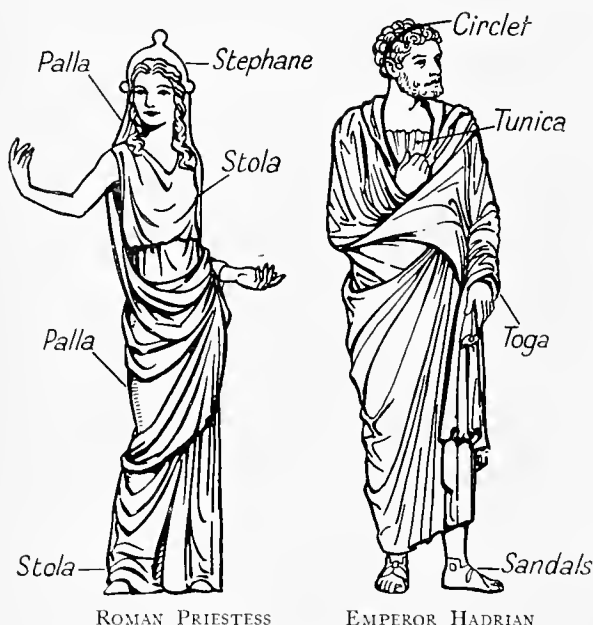


ROMAN LADY

worn by Generals at triumphs was covered by palms embroidered in gold. The *Tunica Latilavaria*, worn by Consuls, Senators, and Priests, had two broad bands (Clavi) of purple, which encircled the neck opening and ran down to the hem in front centre. Similar narrow bands from shoulder to hem, back and front, were allotted to the knights. No girdle was worn with the banded tunic.

The *Toga* (men) worn out of doors over the tunic, was a large cumbersome white woollen cloak. About eighteen feet by seven, it was semi-circular in shape to enable its two ends to just

clear the floor back and front. To wear, place the straight edge, at about a third of its length, on the left shoulder, letting the shorter end fall on the ground in front. Carry the rest of the straight edge across the back and under the right arm. Take the remainder (in front of the body), not at its edge, but about a third of the way down its depth, and let this upper part fall over the front. Gather the bulk now in front and carry it over the left shoulder. The fallen over straight edge now forms a kind of pocket (*sinus*) or loop which



can be tightened by pulling up the left shoulder piece. In this was kept the handkerchief, etc. Later the toga was made of silk. It was never used when mourning.

Under the Empire (31 B.C.—A.D. 476) togas were of scarlet, purple, and violet, but by law white was the correct hue.

The *Toga Praetextata*, worn by magistrates, priests, and censors, was bordered with purple. Freeborn boys under 14 years of age, girls till marriage, and the later Emperors wore this. The *Toga Picta* worn by generals was of purple cloth embroidered with gold stars, and was worn on state occasions also by Emperors and Consuls. The *Toga Candida* worn by candidates for public office was made pure white by chalking and as

much of the body as possible was exposed. The common toga, called *Toga Virilis*, as worn by all men, was of white wool. Children wore togas.

The *Lacerna* (men and women) was an outer mantle worn over the toga. At first it was brown or black and only used by the poor and soldiers. Later it was generally adopted and when red was called a *Birrus*. It was short, sleeveless, open at the sides, and could have a hood called a *Cucullus*. It was fastened by a brooch on the right shoulder.

The *Paenula* (men and women) was a thick woollen travelling cloak, large and circular, with only a neck opening. It was like a full chasuble worn at Mass and was the origin of this vestment. Occasionally left open down the front, it was lifted over the arms each side.

The *Stola* (women) was an Ionic Chiton, i.e. a long tunic fastened along the upper arm by costly brooches to form sleeves. Long and loose, it was essentially an aristocratic garment. It differed from the Greek tunic in having a wide flounce (*instita*) at the bottom and was pulled up under the girdle at the hips. Three loops on each arm is enough. It need not have sleeves. It can be any colour and embroidered, the fabric being wool, silk, or linen.

The *Zona* (women) was a girdle wound round the body under the breasts and at the waist and hips, with long knotted ends hanging to the ground in front.

The *Palla* (women) was a shawl wrap worn over the Stola. It was a rectangle or square of wool worn across the back and over both arms.

The *Pallium* (women) was a cloth cloak with woven intertwining floral designs, bordered with fringe. Like the Palla, it could be placed over the head and was shawl-like.

The *Toga* (women) was only worn in early times by women; later it became the badge of freed slaves and prostitutes, so no respectable matrons would use it.

*Soleae* were slippers of leather or matting with straps, only worn in the house.

*Calcei* were street shoes covering the upper foot and laced or strapped. Senators' shoes were higher cut and patricians' and magistrates' shoes were of the richest leather, ornamented with gold and silver.

The *Pero* was a boot of rough leather or

untanned hide, worn in early times by senators. From 157 B.C. senators, however, wore high black boots with a silver or ivory "C" or crescent-shaped ornament above the heel behind the ankle.

*Caligae* were stout shoes with spiked soles for soldiers.

The colours yellow, white, and green were forbidden in men's shoes.

The *Phaecassium* (women) was a white leather boot covering the whole foot. Occasionally it was worn by effeminate men.

#### LEGS

The men's legs were bare and the women's legs did not show!

#### FEET

*Sandals* (men and women) of open leather work were worn in the house. A strap was passed between the big toe and the rest. There were about four fairly broad straps—loops on one side and ends on the other—tied at the top, and the "lacing" could be covered with a patterned leather or metal "tongue." In addition to these horizontal straps, there were two upright ones at the heel.

#### HAIR

**MEN.** Hair was worn longer earlier; in the bulk of the period men's hair was short, curly or waved, and a short curled beard was common. The emperors, except Marcus Aurelius, were nearly all clean shaven. Priests wore a band of ribbon.

**WOMEN.** Hair was curled, waved, and false hair was dressed in broad plaits, whilst a band of ribbon was bound round maidens' heads, and the staid and respectable adult women, including priestesses.

The *Caul* (women) was a gold wire hair net, pearly, jewelled, and even embroidered—a fashion continually cropping up through the centuries.

#### HATS

Men mostly went bareheaded; the back of the toga could be drawn over.

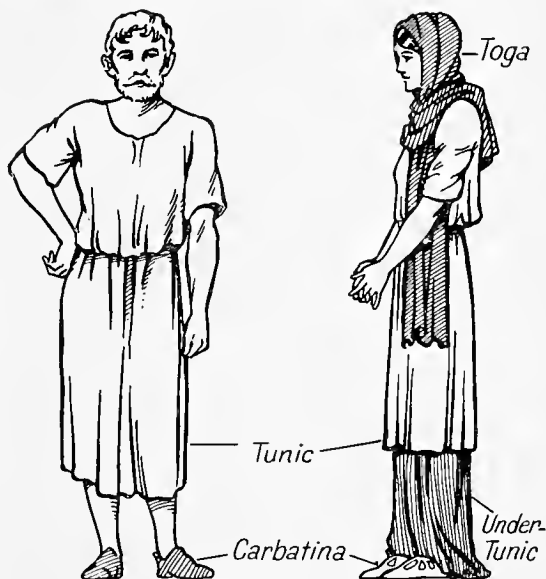
The *Causia* was the same as the Greek Petasus—a broad brimmed, low crowned hat

with ear flaps, like a Pilgrim's hat of the Middle Ages. It was used for travelling by the upper classes.

The *Pileus* was a tightly fitting cone shaped hat worn by the commoners and freed slaves, specially at the Saturnalia.

*Laurel Wreaths* (men) were awarded to the military for their triumphs, and Julius Caesar had special licence always to wear one.

*Gold Coronets*, high in the front, narrowing at



ROMAN PEASANTS

the sides and back, were worn by emperors and kings.

Women wore diadems set with diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, opals, and garnets, and the younger ones used floral wreaths. The shawl garments were used as head coverings, but hats as such did not exist.

#### JEWELS

**MEN.** A signet ring was a man's sole jewel and intaglio rings were used as seals.

The *Bulla* (boys) was a golden ball hung on the necks of boys up to 14 years old, sometimes heart shaped and contained charms.

**WOMEN.** Great profusion of elaborate jewelry was worn by women—necklaces, bracelets, pins, nets, fillets, diadems, and long ear-rings set with stones. Twisted gold wire rings and armlets.

Serpent bracelets. Large-headed pins for the hair. The umbrella and fan may here be mentioned as carried by fashionable women.

#### PEASANTS

Peasants wore a plain tunic, and the *Toga Sordida* or *Pulla*, which was of black or brown with a *Hood* and *Cape* like those of the Greeks or the Medieval Englishman.

*Carbatina* were similar to the Greek, being of soft leather 2 in. wider than the foot, drawn up over it by lacing to cover heel and toe.

Reference to the British Museum will provide a flood of light on the costume, ornaments, and living habits of the Romans, who, like the Greeks, attached much importance to the value of physical development.

#### SUMMARY

##### MEN

##### *Dress*

Tunic—a woollen shirt.

Toga—a woollen cloak of many types for outdoors.

Lacerna—a dark outer mantle and optional hood.

Paenula—a travelling cloak.

##### *Legs*

Bare.

##### *Feet*

Sandals.

Soleae—house slippers.

Calcei—street shoes.

Pero—Patricians' shoes.

Caligae—Soldiers' spiked shoes.

##### *Hair*

Short curled hair and beard. Longer earlier. Emperors mostly clean shaven.

##### *Hats*

None mostly.

Petasis or Causia (see Greeks)—a broad brimmed travel hat.

Pileus—cone shaped.

Back of the Toga.

##### *Hats—contd.*

Laurel wreaths for triumphs and Caesar.

Gold coronet for Emperors.

##### *Jewels*

Signet ring only. Intaglio rings as seals.

Bulla—gold pendant for boys.

#### WOMEN

##### *Dress*

Stola—an Ionic Chiton (see Greeks), with wide flounce, sleeves or without sleeves.

Zona or Fascia—a girdle.

Palla—a shawl.

Pallium—a flowered cloak.

Toga—a cloak in early times only.

Paenula—a travelling cloak.

Lacerna—a dark outer mantle.

##### *Feet*

Sandals.

Phaecasium—of white leather.

Shoes and slippers like men's, only finer.

##### *Hair*

Curled, waved, false, broad plaits.

Caul—a gold hair net.

Veil.

##### *Hats*

Diadems and wreaths.

##### *Jewels*

Rings, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, diadems, pins, nets, fillets. The umbrella and fan.

#### PEASANTS

##### *Dress*

Toga Sordida or Toga Pulla—brown or black cloak tunic.

##### *Hat*

Hood and Cape (see Greeks).

##### *Feet*

Carbatina (see Greeks).

## STRAIGHT MAKE-UP

By A. HARTOP

*Perruquier and Lecturer to Amateur Societies*

"On with the motley, and the paint and the powder"—PAGLIACCI.

WITH the rouge shade on the fingers, blend a little with the flesh shade already under the brows, beginning at the inner corner of the eyes and following the sweep of the brows to fade away at the outer corner, thus deepening the tone and creating a natural shadow. Even with strong footlights, darker shades such as green, blue, and brown, carried up so far that they touch the eyebrows, are perfectly obvious as paint to an audience. Therefore, they should be avoided. Now give the ear tips a tinting of the rouge; also, each nostril, the vertical indentation in the centre of the upper lip, and the horizontal one midway between the lower lip and the chin, and, finally, under the chin. A further step can now be taken, the strengthening or slight accentuation of certain features by means of "high lights," or, as the term implies, by the appropriate use of a shade lighter than the flesh shade. Therefore, No. 1½ may be put to use here. Apply a line down the ridge of the nose, then smooth it to appear like a natural reflection of light. Add a touch to the wings of the nose near the cheeks. Run a line at each side of the shadow in the centre of the upper lip, and, if the chin is not too prominent, blend a touch immediately below the shadow under the lower lip.

Pause here and critically examine your work up to this point. If you are satisfied that the general colouring is even and balanced, that the shadows have been placed without blotches or harsh edges, and that the features have been moderately emphasized, it can be assumed that the foundation is well and truly laid.

### THE EYES

Attention must now be directed to enhancing the expression of the eyes. This is dependent upon such factors as outline, colour, the attending influences of eyelashes, and the shape and colour of the eyebrows. If these are not taken into consideration the most naturally beautiful eyes would, on a well lighted stage, appear dwindled

in size, faded in colour, sunken, and lifeless. To restore the colour, paint, usually of a colour that matches the natural eye colour, is applied to the eyelids, though, in some cases, a different colour may be more effective. Observation indicates that serviceable colours are limited, and that individual choice should be regulated by general type colouring. For blonde types combining fair skin, blue eyes, fair to mid-brown hair, use light or medium blue. For ash-blonde hair, use light blue, with a line of soft brown on the edge of the lids. For platinum-blonde hair, use a mixture of blue and chrome with a line of soft brown on the edge of the lids. For brown eyes, medium to rather dark brown hair, use medium brown. For blue eyes, dark brown or black hair, use purple—a mixture of blue and red. For brown eyes, auburn to red hair, use chrome and blue with a line of brown on eyelid edges. Grey-brown or grey-blue eyes common to middle-aged persons present a more natural look if the eyelids are painted grey-brown, grey-blue, or grey only. Green shades are recommended by some authorities, but my own experience is that when these are used in sufficient quantity to be effective they invariably give an artificial look to the eyes. Black is too intense for any except coal-black eyes. When, with the aid of the suggestions given, the best colour has been decided, proceed to apply the colour by making a soft line close to the edge of the upper lids, smoothing it upward just to the curved fold at the top of the eyeball—no farther, thus meeting the rouge shading at this point. Extend the colour outward so as to lengthen the eyelids slightly (Fig. 8A illustrates the desired effect). This shading is best done with the tip of the little finger or with one end of the chamois stump. Whatever preconceived notion may be held about the shading of the lower eyelids, I suggest that consideration should be given to the alternative methods treated here. Each is effective under the conditions for which it is prescribed. If you are playing in a small

theatre or hall where the audience is quite near and stage lighting is not intense, the simpler method will suffice. With the colour, preferably brown, applied to the upper lids, make a soft shadow under the lower lashes that fades out at the outer corners of the eyes (Fig. 8B). This restores the natural shadow of the eyelashes, but should not be overdone or the effect will be spoilt.



FIG. 5. APPLYING THE POWDER

Remember that paint under the eyes is much more obvious than it is when it is above them. The alternative method, which is more suitable when playing in a large hall or theatre, can best be dealt with later, along with the eyelashes and brows. These are made darker with water cosmetic, which is applied after the face has been powdered.

#### APPLYING THE POWDER

In a previous paragraph (Fig. 5) I explained that face powder is necessary to fix the make-up, and, by counteracting the shiny surface caused by the stage lights, to attain the semblance of natural

flesh. If you have provided "Blending Powder" it may be applied straight from the box. If, however, you have Violet powder and a small box of Natural or Rachel shade, it will be necessary to mix them to suit your foundation tint. The only reason for mixing is to subdue the whiteness of the Violet powder without destroying its quality of transparency. If you apply the blonde foundation—No. 2½ or 2½ plus No. 1½, then use a powder mixture of ¾ Violet and a ¼ natural. If the brunette foundation—No. 2½ plus chrome—give the Violet a creamy tint by mixing some Rachel with it. The two should be thoroughly mixed by shaking. A good plan is to sprinkle some powder, sufficient to allow only a thin coating to adhere to the puff, into the box lid, or on a piece of paper. Powder is best applied in small quantities; difficulties arise if the puff is too loaded. Use the large puff, and start to powder at the least important part—about the neck and jaws and work upward. Apply with a frequent patting motion, so as not to disturb the paint, over the chin, cheeks, nose, and forehead. Pay special attention to the eyes, as owing to their mobility, their warmth and moistness, it is necessary to fix their colour as permanently as possible. Powder the upper lids with the eyes lightly closed, and to avoid crinkles hold the lids down with the free hand, at the same time raising the brows. In the closed position the under lids are covered by the upper lashes, and often missed. Therefore, open the eyes wide and press the powder well into the corners and around the under folds to the outer corners of the eyes. Another reason why the surround of the eyes should be powdered perfectly dry is that water cosmetic is to be applied next. Application will not be possible if any trace of grease remains. See that the ears, the space behind the ears, and the neck receive their share of powder. Do not hesitate to apply more than sufficient in every nook, crevice, and corner, gently patting the face all the time so that the powder is able to absorb every particle of grease. To help this process of absorption the powder should be allowed to stay on the face a few minutes, if time allows, before any attempt is made to brush off the surplus powder. Any little odd job, such as putting paints away, may be done during this brief interval.

Here, it is opportune for me to relate an



incident, concerning powder, which occurred during a performance for which I made up the cast. A young lady, showing signs of distress as a result of inflamed, smarting eyes, and a complexion covered with tiny flakes, inquired what I had used that might be the cause. Knowing that I had used nothing that ought not to have been used, I insisted that something outside my responsibility had occurred. Finally, she admitted that her make-up was all right when it was put on, but that, later, because of perspiration, she had powdered again with a powder, the shade of which had taken her fancy, which she found on my table. Unfortunately, it was a powder that I had used for another lady's hair—shampoo powder.

The face is ready now to be brushed with the baby-brush, hare's-foot, or clean puff. Whichever is used, see that no patch of powder is left in the eye corners or in the ears. If the powdering has been adequate, there should be no grease to be seen.

The eyelashes and the brows come next in order for treatment with water cosmetic. This is painted on with the small brush that is supplied with the cake of paint or with a No. 3 camel-hair brush. If the brush is too wet or if too much paint is applied it will run off. Therefore have the paint thick, and paint each hair separately on its top and under sides. In addition, with the camel-hair brush make a line which will appear as a continuation of the lashes, on each side from the outer side of the upper lashes. Fig. 8c shows that the line is exactly under the extension of the eyelid colour, and is curved outward in the direction of the ear to an extent of about half an inch. Continue with the brush, and draw a fine straight line under the eye to imitate the lower lashes. This is the alternative to shading under the lashes, referred to before powdering, and has the advantage of enlarging the outline to counteract the shrinking effect of lighting. Start the line on the inner side, at a point under where your own lashes begin, continue straight along the edge of the lower lid until it reaches a point under where the lids meet, and then slant up toward the centre of the line coming down from the upper lid. These lines, in effect, extend the corners of the eyes. The eyebrows, if already well defined, only need to have the powder brushed off (a tiny tooth brush or pipe cleaner will serve) to restore their

natural colour. If you need to accent them, you may darken and lengthen them with cosmetic to complete the effect of the enlarged eye. Just what you do depends, of course, on the kind of eyebrows you have.

Before leaving the subject of water cosmetic special attention is directed to Fig. 6, where a



FIG. 6. APPLYING THE EYELASH "HANDYMAN"

quick and accurate method of painting the eyelashes with the aid of a support is demonstrated. This appliance or "handyman" simplifies the operation by allowing the eyelids to be quite still during the application of the paint. This makes it impossible for the cosmetic accidentally to stain the eyelid or to enter the eye and cause irritation. The brush is flat and of stiff hog's hair, which gives better control than a soft brush. The handles of both support and brush are long enough to avoid obstruction of the view in the mirror by the hands.

To use correctly, place the surface of the "handyman" under the lower lashes, then close

the eye so that the top lashes also lie flat on the surface, permitting top and bottom lashes to be painted simultaneously.

Fig. 7A gives a closer view of the appliance, which is made from a piece of fine cork, shaped at the front to the curve of the eye, and at the top to the curve of the eyelashes. The top is covered with thin celluloid, and provides a

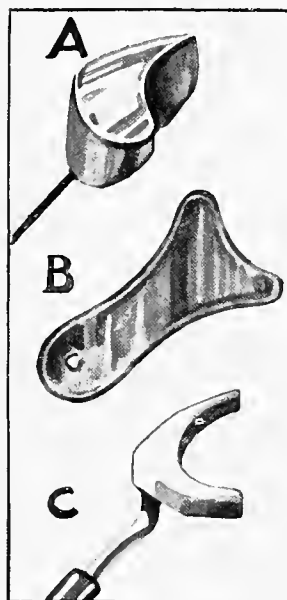


FIG. 7

smooth and washable surface for the lashes to rest upon. Fig. 7B shows a more simple form that may be cut to shape from a flat piece of tortoiseshell or similar material. Fig. 7C illustrates one of the professional models that may be purchased at a theatrical stores. The "handyman" can, of course, be used with any colour of either water or grease paint, providing that it is kept clean and that a separate brush is used. It is probably

best employed by one person using it upon each of the other members, and it saves time when the cast includes many ladies.

### THE LIPS

You may be inclined to wonder why the colouring of the lips was not undertaken at an earlier stage. It is often done when rouging the cheeks—with the same colour—or at any stage before powdering. I have rarely found the results obtained by this method as permanent as when the colouring is applied after other parts of the make-up have been fixed with powder.

The mouth is extremely significant. Its shape lends expression to the whole face. Therefore, it should be treated in such a way as to flatter it, and, also, to ensure that its appearance will not be spoilt by movements, as when singing, speaking, eating, or drinking. For the same reason I ad-

vocate the use of special lipstick, which, being made harder than ordinary grease paint, will not smear as readily by such movements of the lips. Before applying the colour, make sure that there is no loose powder between the lips by wiping them lightly with a face cloth, but do not dislodge the foundation paint.

With your lipstick, or grease paint Carmine 2, place a spot of colour at each side of the centre of the upper lip and smooth out with the finger, chamois stump, or blunt end of an orange stick, following the natural contour. Remember that it is the upper lip that controls the shape of the mouth. Therefore, get the outline correct first, then fill in the enclosed space. Slightly emphasize the Cupid's bow curves, keeping them exactly even and leaving the cleft well defined, or they may run together, making the lip appear unduly thick. Carry the outline to the edge of the lip, if Nature has provided one to your liking, but stop just before the extreme corners are reached, leaving the remainder covered with foundation only, because it is there that the colour smudges so easily, and nothing is more unsightly than a blurred look about the mouth corners. The lower lip is treated the same way—first the outline, then fill in smoothly, and extend to the same outward point as the upper lip. Should, however, a fuller appearance of the lips be desired, carry the colour a little beyond the natural edge of the upper lip, or both, as shown in Fig. 8D. On the other hand, keep the colour well within the edge if already too thick (Fig. 8E).

To restore the natural light and shade of the mouth, the upper lip will now require a darker shading of lake, and the lower lip is improved with a touch of No. 1½ to highlight it. A thin powdering will complete the work on your mouth, which may be checked by comparison with Fig. 8.

At this stage, with the lipstick you have just used, the inner corners of the eyes may be defined by placing a dot there with the point of the chamois stump, and then fixed with powder. The use of this dot must be ruled by judgment. Should the eyes be set close to the nose, or if for any other reason you look better without the dot, it is advisable to omit it. When it is introduced be sure that each dot is in the exact relative position and of equal size.

Your "straight" make-up is now finished.

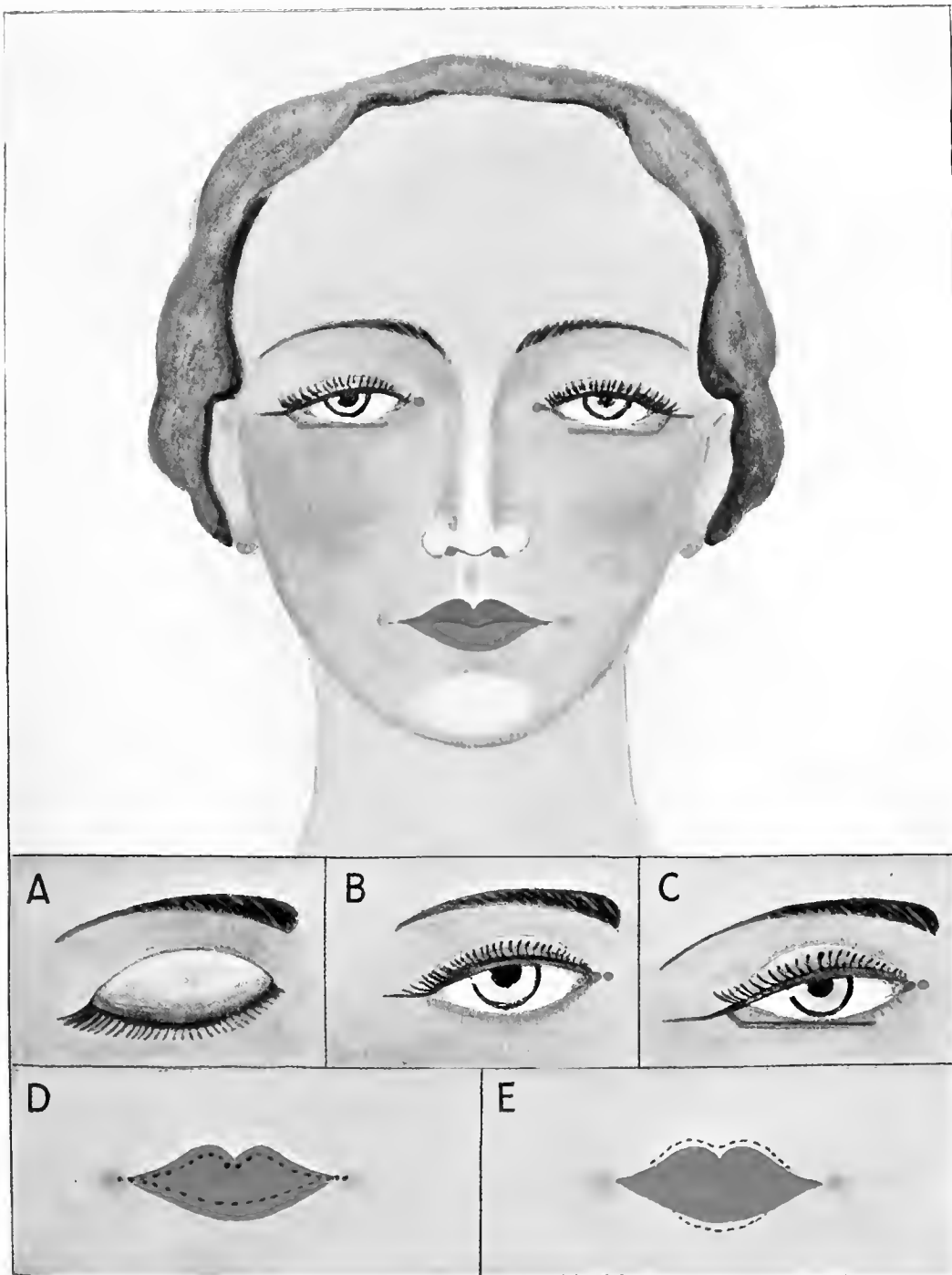


FIG. 3



# LIGHT

By C. HAROLD RIDGE, A.R.S.M., D.I.C., and F. S. ALDRED, A.M.Inst.C.E.

Consulting Engineers

AS a few of the underlying principles of electricity have been stated to assist the reader without previous knowledge, for the same reason it is thought advisable to discuss briefly the subject of light and methods of controlling it.

There are two theories of the nature of light, one, known as the *wave* theory, asserts that light is a disturbance travelling in some medium, the rival theory being that light consists of small particles shot out from a source and scattered by objects they encounter.

There is one thing about light which appears to be definitely established however, and that is its velocity. Various methods have been used to determine this, and it is enough to say that they all agree fairly closely at 300,000 kilometres a second, or 186,000 miles a second.

Light rays pass through or cross each other without being affected in any way, as, for instance, when a "red" beam from a focus lantern crosses a "white" beam from another lantern neither affects nor is affected by the other beam.

The meaning underlying the following terms should be understood—

*Transparency.* When light passes through a body without being scattered, as in the case of clear glass, that body is said to be transparent. A perfectly transparent body would be invisible, and rays of light would pass through it without altering their direction.

*Translucency.* Objects seen through a transparent body are clearly visible, but a material may transmit light without allowing objects to be seen through it, as in the case of frosted and opal glass; such a material is translucent, and light passing through it is scattered.

*Opacity.* A body that does not allow light to pass through it is said to be opaque.

*Absorption.* A portion of the light energy falling on a body is lost as light, being converted into heat. Different bodies or materials have different absorbing capacities, and those possessing low absorption are naturally used for transmitting

or reflecting light. Generally the absorption capacity varies with rays of different wavelength. The absorption in glass varies from 5 to 12 per cent in the case of clear glass globes to 90 to 95 per cent in Cobalt blue globes.

*Transmission.* The passage of light through a material is known as transmission, and a substance that transmits light is called an optical medium. The capacity of materials to transmit light is different for different wave lengths of the light, and those that are used to transmit certain colours are termed filters.

Light is controlled by means of reflectors and lenses. We must therefore consider these in some

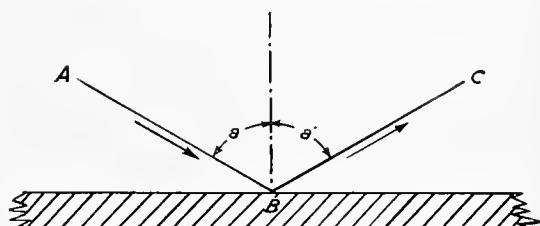


FIG. 6

detail. Reflectors rely for their operation on the primary law that a ray of light meeting a reflecting surface is deflected and leaves it at the same but at an opposite angle. This fact is generally expressed in the statement that the angle of reflection is equal to the angle of incidence.

Fig. 6 shows a light ray  $AB$  (incident ray) striking a polished surface at  $B$  at an angle  $a$ , with a line normal to the surface. The reflected ray  $BC$  makes an angle  $a'$ , equal to  $a$ , with the same line. All the light rays meeting this surface would follow this law, and be reflected by *regular* or *specular* reflection.

Instead of a polished surface, let the light ray strike an unpolished surface, let the light ray strike an unpolished metal or enamelled surface.

Owing to the surface irregularities, the beam will tend to split up into a number of smaller rays, as in Fig. 7, in which it should be noted that the reflected beams are generally in the same

direction, the average angle being similar to the angle of incidence. This is known as *spread* reflection, and is made use of in footlights and battens, in which white enamelled iron reflectors are used, or glass, with a whorled, corrugated, or dented surface.

Should the light ray fall on a matt surface,

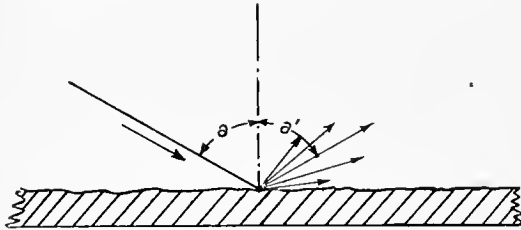


FIG. 7

such as plaster, opal glass, or porcelain, the reflected rays will be scattered in all directions. This is called *diffuse* reflection.

The plaster surface of a cyclorama is an example of this type of reflection used in stage work, and is shown in Fig. 8.

A ray of light striking a polished curved surface obeys the law of equal angles, which in this case is made with a line normal to a tangent to the curve at the point of reflection, as in Fig. 9.

It must be remembered that the whole of the incident ray is not reflected, some of it being absorbed as previously explained, the amount of

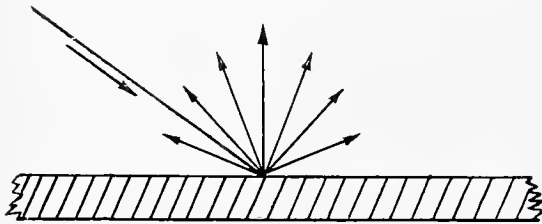


FIG. 8

absorption varying with the nature of the reflecting surface.

The following table gives the reflection coefficients for reflectors chiefly used in the theatre.

Prismatic glass . . .	90
Silvered glass mirror . . .	85
Platinum plated metal . . .	65
Chromium „ „ . . .	65
Stainless steel polished . . .	60
Burnished aluminium . . .	67
White enamelled iron . . .	70

White stoved enamel, despite its good reflection coefficient, has not been used to any great extent in the theatre. White enamel is easy to clean, and could with advantage be more generally used, it being superior to aluminium, which soon tarnishes and, in some districts, corrodes. Although somewhat expensive, prismatic, and silvered glass reflectors, should be used, if possible. Messrs. Holophane, Ltd., of Elverton Street, London, S.W.1, make prismatic glass reflectors of scientific design, with a high efficiency, and examples of good silvered glass

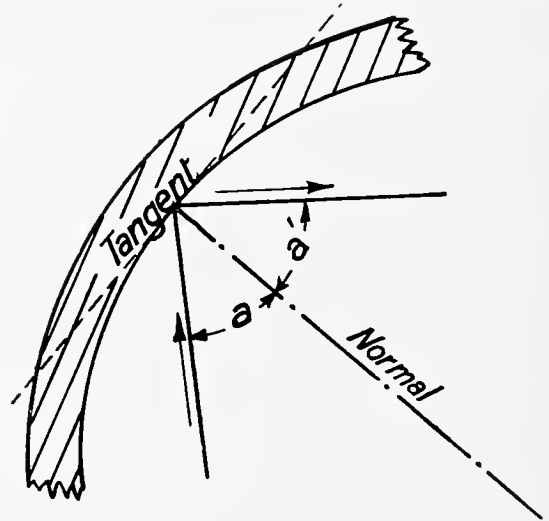


FIG. 9

reflectors may be seen in the showrooms of the leading stage lighting contractors.

Reflectors play an important part in the efficiency of a lighting system. Those that give regular reflection provide perfect control of the light, and are made in many and diverse shapes according to the particular duty that is required of them. Their continued success depends in a large measure upon their being kept clean, whereas too frequently they receive little attention.

*Mirrors.* The term mirror is used to denote a type of reflector optically worked to give the possibility of true adjustments.

*Spherical Mirrors.* These are used to intensify the light from the source by reflecting back rays that otherwise would not be used. This is shown

in Fig. 10, where it will be seen that the reflecting surface is a sector of a sphere and the light rays are reflected back on themselves because they all strike the mirror at right angles to the tangent at the point of reflection. These mirrors are usually made of silvered glass, the "Mangin"

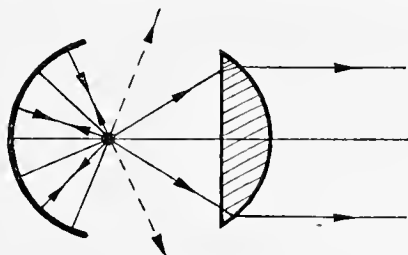


FIG. 10

mirror being the best known. Chromium plated metal mirrors are also coming into use, but the surface must be optically true, or the mirror is worse than useless. This is because most light sources are only approximately a "point," and a poor mirror will still further enlarge the apparent size of the source.

*Parabolic Mirrors.* These are made in the same way as spherical mirrors, and the valuable property they possess is that rays from a source of light placed at the focal centre are all reflected parallel to each other—see Fig. 11.

*Elliptical Reflectors.* These are used to a limited extent. Rays from a source at the near

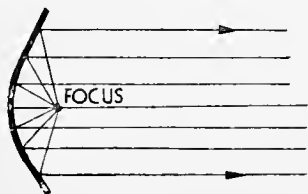


FIG. 11

focus of the ellipse pass through the far focus—see Fig. 12. With both Parabolic and Elliptical Reflectors, a limited adjustment of the angle of the beam can be made by shifting the light source relative to the mirror, but what is frequently forgotten is the "bare lamp distribution." In all cases of mirrors and reflectors, the source of light is emitting direct rays of light away from the mirror, and these are not controlled in any way by the mirror itself.

*Lenses.* Lenses rely for their operation on a phenomenon known as refraction. When a light ray passes obliquely from one transparent medium to another, as from air to water, and to glass, or the

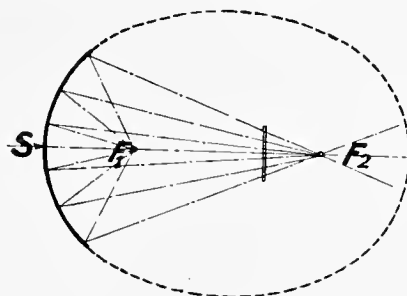


FIG. 12

reverse, its course is altered; it is bent or refracted, the direction of the deflection being that in passing from a lighter into a denser medium the ray is always bent towards the normal to the surface, and vice versa.

Different transparent substances vary in their

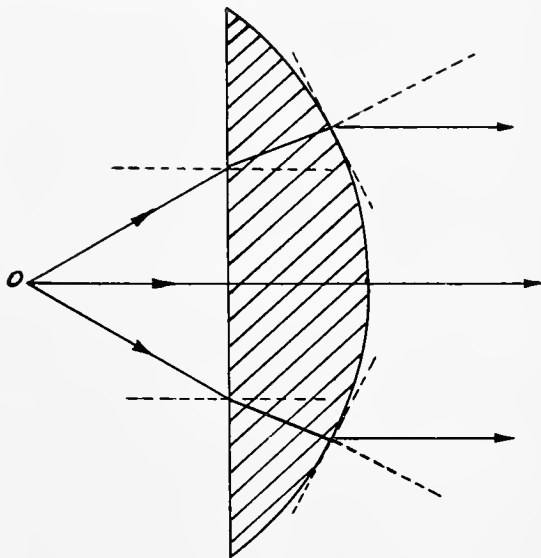


FIG. 13

capacity to bend the ray, the extent being termed the *refractive index*.

Fig. 13 represents a plano-convex lens, the thick dotted lines being light rays from a light source at *O*, whilst the dotted lines are lines normal to the surface at the points of incidence.

It is seen how such a lens redirects and controls part of the light flux emitted by the source.

The lenses principally used in stage lighting apparatus are plano-convex or condenser lenses, and the double convex or objective lens shown in Fig. 14. They are made of glass in which the curvature of the faces is spherical, the amount of curvature determining the extent of the effect on the beams passing through it, causing them either to converge or diverge.

Referring again to Fig. 13, the source of light is at such a position that a parallel beam of light results, the light rays being parallel with the *axis of the lens*, which is a straight line joining the

found helpful in preventing breakages to place the new lens in cold water, which is then brought slowly to boiling point, and left to cool slowly.

Special heat resisting lenses can be obtained at increased cost, which is not justified unless the conditions under which they work are exceptionally severe.

Cracked lenses are chiefly caused by moving the lamp too near the lens in order to obtain a wide-angle beam. If such a beam is required, a lens of longer focus should be used.

It is not good practice to "back-focus," that is, to place the lamp beyond the focal point of the lens, as the result is a mottled beam, with increased

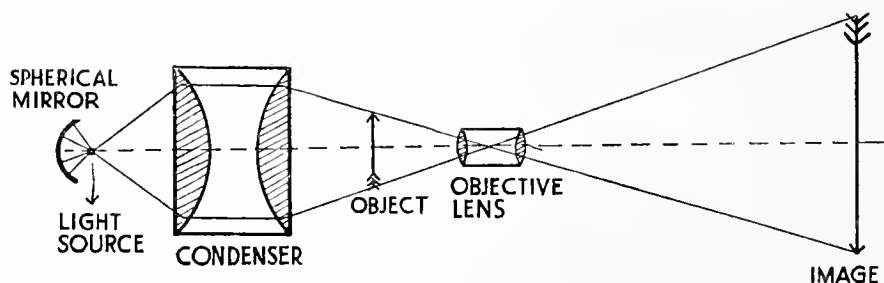


FIG. 14

centres of the two surfaces. The distance from the *centre* of the lens to the point *O* is called the *focal length* of the lens.

By moving the light source between *O* and the lens, the beam will be made to diverge.

Lenses can be obtained in various diameters, and of different focal lengths, the usual stock sizes being—

6 in. diameter	×	6 in. focus
6 in. "	×	8 in. "
6 in. "	×	10 in. "
5 in. "	×	9 in. "
5 in. "	×	10 in. "
4 in. "	×	6 in. "
3½ in. "	×	7 in. "

They are of good quality glass, optically ground.

Lenses frequently crack, but as the optical properties of a cracked lens are little impaired, unless it actually falls to pieces, it should be left as it is. In many theatres, 90 per cent of the lenses will be found to be cracked. It has been

light losses, although by back-focusing, a wide-angle beam is obtained without lens heating.

*Projectors.* For the projection of an actual image (such as a lantern slide), a slightly more elaborate optical system is used, and also for the projection of a highly directed beam for sharp spots of light, variable in size by means of an iris diaphragm. It is essentially only a system of plano-convex lenses (forming a condenser) which concentrates the rays coming from the light source into a cone for the illumination of the slide (or other object)—see Fig. 14. The image of the slide is focused by means of an adjustable objective lens. This is merely the well-known magic lantern, so, within limits of focusing, the image increases in size the farther the lantern is away. As on the stage the lantern is usually in a fixed position, the objective lenses are changed instead, wide-angle lenses being used for producing large images and narrow angle for smaller ones.



# THUNDER

By A. E. PETERSON

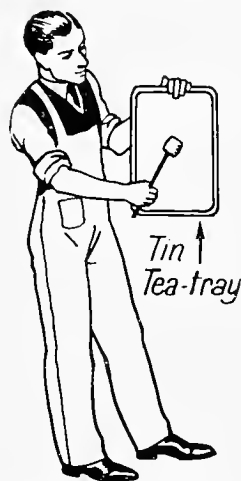
*Founder, Sunday Night Adventurers ; Secretary, Kingston Marionette Players, etc.*

AFTER the blinding flash of lightning comes the menacing roll of thunder. It may reverberate overhead with nerve shattering violence, or it may roar and rumble along at a distance, fading away until all that is heard is an occasional angry mutter. It is an effect that requires careful arrangement and the particular circumstances that obtain on the stage at the time must determine the volume of sound that is produced. If thunder is introduced to drown the report of a revolver or to cover a crash of glass it must not be forgotten that it is stage thunder and that it must be so controlled that the noise of the deadly shot that causes all the complications in the play is heard plainly, but at the same time does not make the noise of the elements seem puny in comparison, and that the sound of breaking glass is not out of proportion to requirements. Dialogue must also be heard above the roar of the storm so that none of the plot is missed by the audience. The wise producer will see that the person who actually produces the thunder when the play is staged is carefully rehearsed beforehand, otherwise an effect intended to be serious may be funny with disastrous results to the production.

In the old days there was a weird contrivance called a thunder box or cart. This was a long, heavy, wooden box, roughly mounted on springless wheels of irregular shape. The wheels themselves, two or three inches thick, had edges that were unevenly corrugated and thunder was produced by the cart being pushed from one side of the stage to the other by three or four stage hands. Sometimes the cart went along on two wheels, sometimes on three. The cart was weighted by being filled with old iron, bricks, and rounded stones or cobbles. The volume of sound that was produced by it was enormous. In some theatres a smaller edition of the thunder cart was rolled in the flies.

Another effective piece of mechanism for the production of thunder was known as the "rabbit hutch." This was a tall, narrow box fitted with

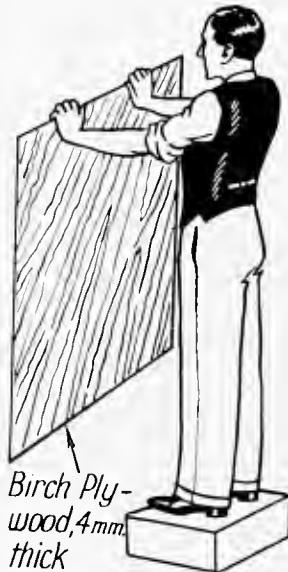
a number of shelves so arranged that they sloped outwards and downwards. Each shelf had its own door, which consisted of a strip of wood hinged at one end and secured at the other by a metal turn button. Each shelf held three or four large heavy iron balls. When thunder was required the retaining buttons were turned and the balls dropped into a chute that zigzagged its way down the side or back wall of the theatre. The chute was plentifully supplied with obstacles that caused



the balls to jump and bump and the run also contained numerous shallow steps. At the end of each length of run the balls, instead of turning round a corner, frequently dropped through a hole on to the next run and continued the journey. For an occasional clash of thunder directly overhead, the "rabbit hutch" was used, but the heavy balls, instead of entering the chute, fell into a wooden box, which was fitted with two or three deep steps.

There are many ways of producing thunder. If the building is one that is regularly used for stage purposes it is possible that there may be a "thunder sheet" as part of the stage fittings. If not, and if it is decided that a thunder sheet must be provided, a piece of sheet-iron, six or

seven feet long by three or four feet wide will be required. This sheet of metal is suspended from the roof by strong leather thongs or similar material and is hung in a convenient place sufficiently high to allow the lower end to be reached with comfort and clear of the wall so that it will vibrate freely. At the lower end are fixed two metal handles; a second or so after the lightning has flashed the handles are grasped and shaken. If sheet iron cannot be obtained a sheet of block tin of about the same size can be used as a



substitute. Care should be exercised to ensure that the sheet does not sound too "tinny" when it is vibrated. If the noise produced is too heavy for our needs we may moderate the tone by striking the thunder sheet with a drumstick or a mallet. In a well known London theatre hanging up near the thunder sheet are two large mallets, one well padded with blanket material and the other one having one end covered with a large piece of indiarubber cut from an old motor tyre, and nailed in position, with the other end just plain wood. With a choice of three beating surfaces, the operator can obtain almost any variety of thunder sound that is required.

If a thunder sheet is out of the question, other methods may be adopted. For instance, a large tin tea tray, properly beaten or shaken, is effective.

It may be beaten with the flat of the hand, with the fist, or with a padded mallet. With careful use a tray will last a long time. A medium sized zinc bath hung up by the handles and beaten skilfully will also provide good thunder.

A small covered handcart such as bakers use, with a series of loosely fitting wooden shelves or trays on runners, if pushed over a series of laths or battens nailed to the stage, will produce a rumbling noise similar to the thunder cart, but on a much smaller scale. If the battens are of uneven sizes and at unequal distances apart, the effect is improved.

In one of the largest theatres in the North of England an almost perfect thunder was produced by violently vibrating the bottom of a large empty tank that had originally been part of a gas engine plant. During structural alterations to the theatre it was necessary to dismantle the thunder sheet. An emergency arising, the tank was brought into use, and it proved to be so successful that it was fixed permanently, and is now in regular use.

Many amateur societies depend solely upon the use of a bass drum for the production of thunder effects. Properly "rolled off" the drum produces many variations of tone. To heighten the effect a gentle suggestion of a burr . . . rr . . . r . . . r from the cymbals is helpful, but it should not be overdone.

A wooden cask three parts full of sand rolled slowly across the stage will also provide a good rumble of thunder or in place of sand the cask may contain a couple of heavy iron balls if such are obtainable. Iron balls enclosed in a heavy metal cylinder made of corrugated iron mounted in a frame and rotated by means of a handle, constitute another successful thunder device.

Perhaps the best effect of all is that produced by the use of a sheet of ply-wood. It should be made of birch, four millimetres thick, and free from cracks. The edges should not be frayed. The sheet is gripped firmly with both hands, raised clear of the floor of the stage, and then vigorously shaken. The volume of sound that can be obtained is remarkable, and in the hands of a skilful operator the effect is satisfying. The cost of a sheet of plywood is about eighteenpence and it may be purchased from almost any joiner or cabinet maker or from the shops that specialize in the supply of woodworking materials.

## KINDS OF MUSICAL PLAYS

By DUMAYNE WARNE

TO attempt to group all musical plays into neat water-tight compartments would be an impossible task, but there are rough divisions into which most of them fall. For the benefit of those who are interested in the formation of a new society, I indicate them.

It must be understood that there are certain to

4. Musical Comedy.

5. Modern Musical Comedy and Revue.

Before discussing the salient features of difficulty of these five, a word must be said with regard to the term "adequate." What is regarded as adequate by one society is hopelessly amateurish and inept for another, and polished and remotely pro-



A SCENE FROM "CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA," WHICH ADMIRABLY ILLUSTRATES THE INTENSITY OF THIS KIND OF PRODUCTION

Photo by J. W. Debenham

be a number of exceptions; nevertheless if a committee can gauge roughly the strengths and weaknesses of their company they will know which group to tackle, and may thereby be saved a good deal of time in reading plays that it is absolutely useless for them to consider.

Gilbert and Sullivan apart, there are roughly five types of musical play, each having its own particular requirements that must be fulfilled before an adequate production of any one of them can be given.

They are—

1. Grand Opera.
2. Light Opera.
3. Romantic Musical Plays.

fessional for a third. I take it that an adequate performance is one in which the degree of competence is such that the audience is enabled to forget that the actors are amateurs and to enjoy the production for its artistic merits.

For the first of our types, *Grand Opera*, the chief requirement is a standard of singing such as is not likely to be found in any society except, of course, a singing school or some institution that brings together a large number of people who are talented at the art of singing in a way quite out of the ordinary.

It is necessary to be able to find singers, of both sexes with voices of outstanding range and quality, and musicians, trained in the more

complicated branches of these arts, who are capable of singing or playing the difficult arrangements that the great composers include in their works.

There is a kind of intensity about Grand Opera which is absent from any other type of musical production. A kind of intensity which, even in the lighter moments of the work, spreads over the whole thing and gives the audience a strange feeling of awe.

The singing qualification is not the only one that is required. Some people seem to think that in Grand Opera it is all that matters. This is not so. It is one of the most important things, but the most magnificent singing in the world can be wrecked by bad acting, and also by what, curiously enough, most opera singers are, on account of their art, likely to suffer from—a bad stage presence. The exactions of the singer's art are such that we have to accustom ourselves to see juvenile leads (of both sexes) of great bulk, and although we are able to overlook it at Covent Garden, where the ensemble is such that any *one* defect can be excused, this defect alone in a typically amateur production might have the effect of reducing an otherwise well behaved audience to hysteria.

In the next section, *Light Opera*, are included those works such as *Merrie England*, *Tom Jones*, etc. These are, perhaps, the most suitable of all for a society that does not intend to begin with Gilbert and Sullivan, but which has some musical capabilities without any great experience of stagecraft, to undertake. They are extremely musical, but at the same time they are not as difficult as, nor have they the intensity of, Grand Opera. They have good plots, but they do not require such strength and experience of straight acting as do those in the next section. In fact, if they can be adequately cast and mounted, and a competent producer found, a new society is more likely to give a satisfyingly pleasant reproduction of one of these works than of any other kind. In the process the members will learn something of stages and stagecraft that will be serviceable in subsequent productions.

The next type, *Romantic Musical Plays*, is probably the most exciting of all to play in. Although most of them have some fine music in them, they depend almost entirely for their

success on the strength of the plot and the way in which the dialogue is handled. From the point of view of the audience, there is no question of sitting and merely listening to music. They are intended to be gripped and carried away by the story. These plays have a kind of intensity, but it is quite different from that of Grand Opera. The difference is rather like that between tragedy and drama. An atmosphere of "bravura" pervades them, in fact they are thrilling rather than uplifting.

To secure this, it is essential that the stage presence of the leading characters should fit in exactly with the requirements of the book. The hero must be tall and handsome, with a manly baritone voice. The heroine must be beautiful with a soprano voice, either strong and determined or coy and wistful, as the case may be. The villain, of course, will look saturnine, and talk his songs. For the chorus there are all sorts of excitements in the way of marching songs, drunken brawls, and genuine battles. *The Rebel Maid* and *The Vagabond King* are fair examples of this type.

Next comes the type which the new society that has some versatility of accomplishment beyond singing is best advised to attempt—*Musical Comedy*. It is most suitable for those whose singing ability is not perhaps of such a high standard as the ones who can successfully tackle Light Opera as a beginning, but in which there is a good deal of material ready for development in a dancing chorus.

It must not be assumed from the above that I have a low opinion of these plays or of the societies that perform them—far from it—but the point is that they contain a much greater diversity of interest than any other type except Revue. Consequently a weakness (and there are bound to be *some* weaknesses in a performance by a new society, however brilliant the opening) is much less likely to affect the success of the show as a whole.

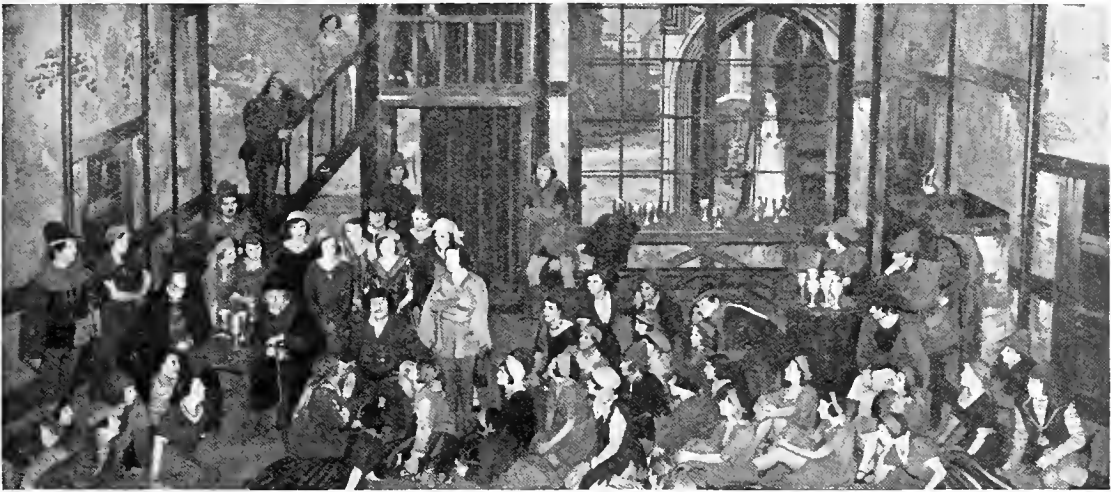
For example—a society that has a lady who can sing and act and dance a little could successfully cast her as "Prudence" in *The Quaker Girl*, whereas it could not attempt *The Vagabond King* unless the "Katharine" could look beautiful and sing and act outstandingly, although she might not be able to dance a step.

In plays of this type are to be found some numbers, which, together with their accompanying effects, have achieved a fame that will outlive all of us, e.g. "Tell me, pretty maiden," "She is the Belle of New York," and the "Totem Song" from *Rose Marie*.

It will have been gathered from the above that this class includes *The Quaker Girl*, *The Belle of New York*, *Miss Hook of Holland*, etc.

Societies that begin on this type will, almost

by a society that is without members who have extensive stage experience, as the production is likely to become dull from lack of pace and pep if inexperienced amateurs are responsible for it. The fact is that the book of these works is often so feeble that unless it is extremely well played, this will soon become apparent to the audience, with the inevitable result. After speed, the next thing is dancing; and that is why these shows are most suitable for societies which, as



A SCENE FROM "THE VAGABOND KING"

Photo by J. W. Debenham

certainly, proceed along either of two courses. They will either, after a time, during which the company will become experienced and develop their talents according to their own instincts, tend to the more musical type of production, ending up, finally, perhaps, with Grand Opera, or else they will go in the opposite direction and, passing through a course of Modern Musical Comedy, end up with Revue.

Which brings us naturally enough to the last two types of show.

As I write I am not sure that each of these is not sufficiently different to deserve a class to itself. They have, however, certain points in common that make it convenient to discuss them together for the purposes of this article. The first and foremost requirement (especially for *Revue*) is speed, and if they have any intensity, it is this. Neither type of show should be attempted

they have progressed, have developed their dancing rather than their singing. Not, of course, that the singing does not matter; but some weakness here can be overlooked, whereas a weakness in the dancing department cannot.

Apart from the solo dancers of one sort or another (Step, Kicking, etc.), it is necessary for these shows to have one or two teams of chorus girls, of any number between 6 and 16 each, according to the size of the society and of the stage, capable of looking smart and prepared to give up a lot of time to learning step-dancing, etc., and doing it together. This is not as a rule so difficult as it sounds, as once the girls get started they usually enjoy the work, and consequently they soon make progress.

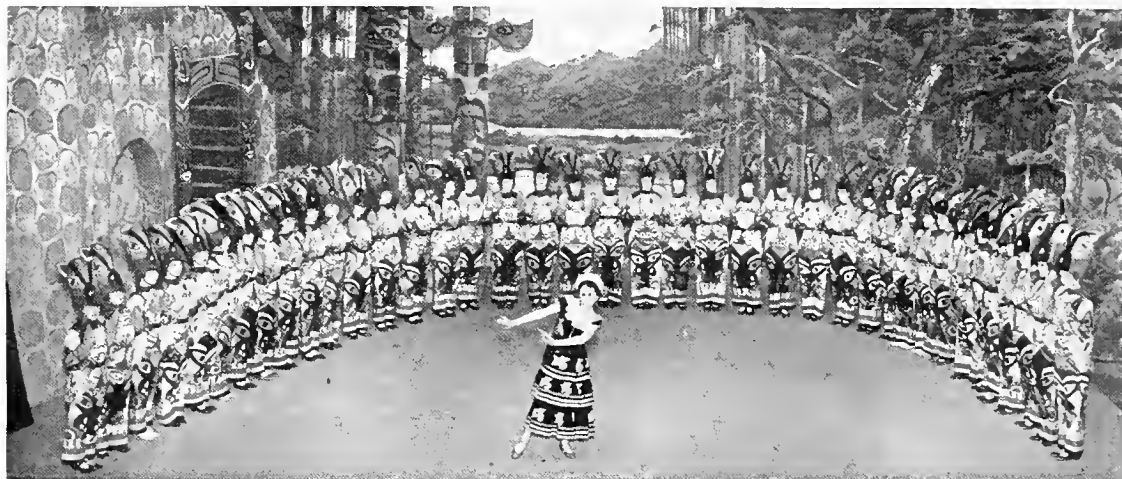
It is much more difficult to find men. The principals are easily cast, but chorus men who have suitable clothes (of course they can be

hired, and ordinarily one does not find 12 men with lounge suits all exactly alike) and who are prepared to go through the somewhat invertebrate contortions required of the male chorus in these plays, are difficult to secure. However, there are some societies that have not much of a male chorus and since what is in the book as chorus work for them can usually be cut drastically, this might prove to be an advantage in certain circumstances.

success with one good turn in a weak show. It is much wiser to educate your company a bit; then when you are able to choose plays for your star, you will be able to back up him or her enough to make it worth while.

Having decided then on what is the strength, choose a play of the sort at which you are most likely to be able to give a performance of the highest general level, and then you are ready for the casting.

If there does not seem to be any special



A SCENE FROM "ROSE MARIE"

A typical example of the sort of "effect numbers" to be found in productions of this type

*Photo by J. W. Debenham*

The chief difference between Modern Musical Comedy and Revue is that in Revue, since any part of it can be "starred" to order, more chance can be given to pure specialists such as singers, dancers, or actors, each of whom has only one talent, than is the case in a play with a plot. But all societies are warned against running away with the idea that Revue is easy—it is not. Because it is so nebulous in form it is likely to be nebulous in effect, unless it is put together with great discrimination and brilliantly played.

Remember, the worst concert party you have ever seen is a sort of Revue: can you guarantee that your show will be any better than that?

Summing up, it is clear that what you have to decide on is the main strength of your company, bearing in mind that strength means all round strength and not that of your best performer, for it is a mistake to imagine that you can win

strength that should be utilized in particular, it is safer to choose either a Light Opera or a Musical Comedy and then to see what happens afterwards. You may find that after having done one or two of them, an enormous interest develops in the dancing, in which case you will know what plays to consider next; or you may find that nobody wants to dance, in which case you will be ready to attack Grand Opera when the time comes.

Remember, finally, that though it is a good thing to give your company something to do that may be a bit beyond them—otherwise they will never improve—it is the height of folly to start too ambitiously with something that is completely outside their powers. This might open the society's career with a failure, from the ill-effects of which, on both audience and members, it may never revive, and from which, after languishing for a few performances, it will most likely die.

## THE SAVOY TRADITION

By D. GRAHAM DAVIS

Editor of "The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal"

SO much is heard in connexion with Gilbert and Sullivan Opera of that little word "tradition" that it is as well to devote some thought to this all-important term, and to endeavour to discover in what way it applies to these works. Even as necessary it is to have a clear perception of what the Savoy tradition is

true meaning of the Savoy tradition, what is immediately discovered? The Gilbertian situation of Gilbert himself being one of the greatest offenders against his own tradition! It has to be remembered that Gilbert's connexion with the operas was not confined to the original productions. It extended over a long period of



"YOUR REVELS CEASE . . ."

Costumes, scenery, and faces may change; the Savoy tradition remains constant

Photo by J. W. Debenham

not: in fact it is permissible to wonder how many of those who habitually use the word in speaking or writing of the operas know exactly what it means. Webster defines "tradition" as "the transmission of any . . . practice . . . by oral communication, without written memorials."

As to its particular meaning as applied to Gilbert and Sullivan Opera, one may well imagine the chorus of replies from dyed-in-the-wool enthusiasts (a race by no means peculiar to this art-form) that it stands for the presentation of the works identically in the manner in which they were first produced—every movement, every gesture, just as they were when the operas first saw the light of the stage.

It is as well to dismiss this conception from one's mind at once; if this, indeed, should be the

London runs, tours (at home and overseas), and revivals. It lasted until within a year or two of his death. During this time, both in his capacity as author and as producer, Gilbert was frequently making changes, large and small, in words and business.

It may not be out of place, even at the risk of wearying the reader, to detail some of these changes, for without concrete evidence (such is the hold this false idea of the tradition has obtained) they are likely to be denied.

Beginning with the first of the longer operas (excluding the almost forgotten *Thespis*), we find *The Sorcerer*, originally produced in 1877, revived in 1884 with a completely new opening to the second act. *H.M.S. Pinafore*, which followed, had alterations during Gilbert's days that included



an entire change in the make-up of the male chorus, greatly altered business, and, on one occasion, the introduction of the words and music of "Rule, Britannia" as the climax of the second act finale. Indeed, this last interpolation, although not long lived on the professional stage, is not unknown to-day in some amateur productions,



Photo by J. W. Debenham

#### BEFORE THE CURTAIN ROSE

Shadbolt and Meryll take a rest from "tradition" by sharpening swords on Phoebe's spinning wheel

although band-parts containing Sullivan's authentic finale are available.

Changes in the succeeding opera, *The Pirates of Penzance*, can be found on comparing the original libretto with that now published and in use. Frederic is now given a testimonial as an efficient scuttler of Cunard and P. & O. ships. The original of the second of these steamship lines was the White Star. The German Mauser rifle has replaced the French *chassepôt* in the Major-General's patter song. Long and acrimonious has been the discussion over the policemen's "Right oh," in this opera. Originally "Very well," the interjection became "Right you are," and so, by a gentle progression, to its present form. That Gilbert approved this last change has often been questioned. It can be stated that, far from disapproving, he was so

delighted with its success as to be restrained with difficulty from scattering a plentiful crop of "Right oh's" throughout the opera.

Ignoring the cut now made of a quotation from *H.M.S. Pinafore*, which formerly appeared in the second act finale of *The Pirates of Penzance*, mention might be made of one more alteration inserted by the author. The pirates are commanded to yield "in Queen Victoria's name." At one time, early in the present century, they were so charged in "Good King Edward's name," to which they replied—

"We yield at once without a sting,  
Because with all our faults we love our King."

*Patience*, too, is well supplied with alterations and variants. About 1900, when the Central London Railway was opened, the "threepenny bus young man" was temporarily replaced by the "tuppenny Tube young man." As some doubt still exists as to which is the correct form, it might be noted that an official edict from the Savoy gives the verdict in favour of "threepenny bus." Most of the other changes in this opera are of small importance, but there are more than people would believe. For instance, the whole reading of the part of Grosvenor has been remodelled. In more senses than one was the first of the line a "fleshy poet." To-day we look for a slim, good looking, youth.

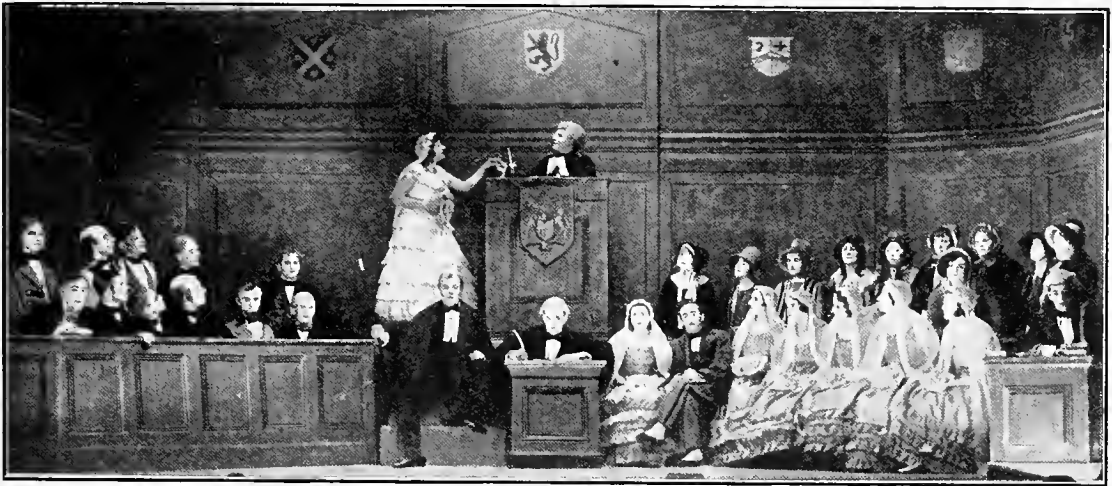
A major change in *Iolanthe*, the opening ballet, has been introduced since Gilbert's days. But it does not greatly concern us, for amateurs have every reason to prefer the simpler, if less effective, original opening. It is on record, however, that Gilbert was not averse to suggesting alterations to this opera, although they do not seem to have been adopted to any great extent. At one revival he had the notion that a workable clock might be installed in Act II, to indicate the actual time at which the events, from the rise to the fall of the curtain, were supposed to be taking place. On the same occasion he expressed a doubt whether Mountarat and Tolloller were correctly attired in the second act. Noblemen of their position, he argued, would probably carry a rank (such as Lord Lieutenant) which would entitle them to wear some uniform different from ordinary civilian court dress.

There is no need to prolong this list into the



later operas, although there are other examples of changes at least as convincing as those quoted. These have been sufficient to show that this popular conception of the Savoy tradition is erroneous. Having, then, gone to some length in explaining what the tradition is *not*, let us take the other side of the picture, and discuss what it *is*. It may well have been imagined that my purpose was to show that the tradition does not exist save in the imagination; that it is a myth, and should

We must not disregard these prompt books; they play some part towards the understanding of the fundamentals of the tradition. Gilbert was that rare thing, a genius in stagecraft, who could be allowed to mould his company as he willed, making them, as it were, puppets interpreting his every gesture and intonation. Therefore, in laying down these explicit instructions, Gilbert was putting life into the image *he* had conceived of how *his* lines were to be spoken, how *his* situations



"TRIAL BY JURY"

Photo by J. W. Debenham

Although posed for a photographic record, this picture helps to demonstrate how an effect can be spoiled by actors obviously not taking an interest in the scene being played

be disregarded. Far from it. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the tradition is a real thing.

So are the traditions of a great regiment or school. Yet who, if asked to describe such traditions, could do so satisfactorily? The task here is less difficult, since one has not to make an immediate verbal reply. I have referred to the view that the Savoy tradition means adherence to the exact manner of the original productions. In support of this one is confronted with the legends of the copiously annotated prompt books in the archives of the Savoy. These show, to the minutest detail, the exact position of the characters at any point; they are said to contain instructions as to the delivery of every line. But how are these writings to be reconciled with the dictionary's insistence on "*oral* communication, without written memorials"?

were to be treated, and how *his* characters were to behave. But he was neither so blind nor so arrogant as to suppose that because he had obtained the results he required from A, he would equally gain equal effectiveness in an identical manner from a successor to the part.

Gilbert's appearance does not suggest the owner of a brilliant, delicate, whimsically-mordant wit. He took himself seriously, and it is this side of him that comes out in the production of his operas. He wanted them to appear to be serious, straightforward works with humorous incident and characterization. But the playing of the parts was to be, to all intents and purposes, "straight." He would never allow his actors to "improve" upon his work. "But it will get a laugh," said one, reproved at rehearsal for an unauthorized interpolation. "So it would," countered Gilbert icily, "if you sat down on a pork

pie." That story, possibly apocryphal, helps to describe one aspect of the tradition. Clarity of diction, and complete absence of offence in word, dress, and gesture were other things upon which Gilbert insisted.

Yet even so we are little nearer a satisfactory definition of "tradition." It is indefinable; an elusive "something" that defies attempts at cold analysis. What, then, is it?

Mr. J. M. Gordon has come nearest to the difficult task of giving a satisfactory meaning to the word in its application to Gilbert and Sullivan Opera. This gentleman has lived and worked among the operas for over half a century. During that time he has risen from the position of a chorister to become stage director of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. He learnt to understand and love the works and their traditions under Gilbert's own tutelage. The traditions, says this doyen of the operas, do not mean that because an actor, creating a part, moved his arm "so," the gesture was to be copied exactly by the actors later succeeding to the part. Nor did it mean denying the use of modern lighting and progress in stage costuming that had not been in existence when the operas were first produced. The great aim and tradition was, and remains, to build up the intellectual performance of the works.

And, when one considers it, this is a real aim and tradition; a noble one, too. It is because the operas are regarded by their performers as intellectual works that they live and enchant, and stand out as the one abiding British light opera series. Here we find characters played as though they were real personages. There is no laughing up their sleeves. Not in these operas is to be found the grotesqueries of the "funny man" and the vacuous insincerity of the languid juvenile leads, of both sexes, of musical comedy. Once the players begin to be, or are allowed to be, funny, or even to show openly that they are aware of the comicality of the characters they are portraying, then—immediately—this intellectual atmosphere is lost. That is a point that cannot be too strongly impressed upon amateurs. It is not, therefore, indulging in any high-brow sentiment to employ the word "intellectual" in connexion with the tradition. One is but speaking the truth—the truth that Gilbert himself knew, and insisted upon, and handed down. To-day it is imparted

to the newest recruit—be he stage beginner or experienced artist—who enters the ranks of the professional organization.

The Savoy tradition, I have tried to show, refers to the spirit in which the works are performed, rather than to the manner. Words alone will not instil this spirit; a study of the works themselves, either on the stage or in the library and music room, is essential. In this way one can come to understand and appreciate them, and realize all that is in them. There is no other way.

Let me emphasize the paramount importance of traditional renderings by quoting from a newspaper cutting that lies before me as I write. "In Blankville [let us say] our thirst for Gilbertian nights has fortunately not had to rely for its stimulation upon the comparatively rare visits of the D'Oyly Carte Company, for the Blankville Players . . . have provided us with annual efforts." This quotation shows at least one thing—that the inhabitants of this considerable provincial city regard the amateurs' productions as of almost equal importance to those of the professional company. Is it not, then, the duty of the amateurs to return this high compliment by giving performances worthy of such comparison? However efficient the production, however skilled the artists, such comparison cannot be attained without a full regard for, and perfect understanding of, the tradition.

One might call this a counsel of perfection; so, in a way, it is. Yet it is not a perfection difficult to attain. If it is realized fully what the tradition implies, if the correct atmosphere (referred to in an earlier article) is kept foremost in the minds of all associated with the production, then will it be found that a performance quite capable of holding its own against the professional favourites will easily be achieved. No one looks to amateurs to give a performance that will be technically of the standard of the professional artists. In a performance given with an intelligent regard for the tradition such defects will not be apparent. Some may think that to give an exact and photographic reproduction of the professional performance will have the effect of being "traditional." Even if this were so, would such an imitation be art? But this point must be reserved for subsequent consideration.

## ECONOMICS OF DANCING

By ARNOLD L. HASKELL

*Founder of the Camargo Society, Director of the Ballet Club*

AT the present day in England serious theatrical dancing is in an extremely precarious position. Admitted that we possess the necessary machinery to produce greatness, the machinery to exploit it is practically non-existent. We have many fine schools and some quite exceptionally gifted dancers. What is their position?

Take the child whose parents decide to turn her into a dancer. If they are prudent they will wait until she is about 8 years old or even later. The story of the necessity of intensive early training is a dangerous fallacy that is responsible for the ugly development of superfluous muscle. They will then take her to a good school and let her attend classes once or twice a week until the teacher advises them that she is sufficiently developed to attend daily. They will, if they are wise, pay great attention to her general education in the directions I have already indicated. They should most certainly take her to see as many performances of ballet as possible.

Now translate all this into £ s. d. A weekly class will work out at about 3s. 6d. twice a week for two years (allowing for holidays), £25. After that for about four years at £50 per annum, £200. After that she may be fitted to earn a living. These direct charges are inexpensive, and, moreover, no responsible teacher will turn away a really promising pupil through lack of money.

Look into a typical classroom and follow the fortunes of twenty pupils, children whose parents are full of thoughts of future Pavlovas. Of those twenty, five may get married too soon to attempt a career. Who can say whether their dancing has helped them there? Five may be utter failures, whose dancing has probably aided them in being a little more gracious in ordinary life. The other ten will go on the stage in some branch or other of the profession. One of them may find fame and fortune in musical comedy. I can remember June as the most promising pupil in the academy that produced Dolin and Markova. The majority will drift into the

chorus and find really hard work but a fair living there. Occasionally in some classroom there will be a girl who is remarkably talented and ambitious to continue in ballet. Her path will be hard, and the occasional work, all too often unpaid, must



ALICIA MARKOVA

*Photo by Brewster*

be its own reward. The position has been modified by the formation of a permanent ballet company at the "Vic-Wells," which replaces on a small scale an official opera house, also by the Ballet Club, with its permanent company. Obviously, however, vacancies are few and the remuneration is well below the more commercial theatres.

This view may be a depressing one for the beginner, but I can honestly say of the many girls whose careers I have watched that there is scarcely one who has not benefited physically and materially by the training, and who is not far better equipped to take up some branch of the theatrical profession. Dancing is undoubtedly the basis of all art where disciplined gesture is required, and the film companies want girls who are able to move correctly. If the production side of

the theatre is the pupil's ambition, the dancing class again, with its disciplined movement, is the right training. No one has ever been able to handle a stage crowd with greater genius than Fokine in *Petrouchka*, while Mamoulian, producer of *Porgy* and other films, has shown the value of a choreographic approach to the theatre.

usual gifts for an artist to keep an audience interested for a whole evening by her own unaided efforts, gifts that are somewhat outside those that I have mentioned. She must be definitely creative, with a strong literary bias, and a vast range of mood. The concert artist is all too often a dancer who seeks self-expression outside ballet



MME. RAMBERT EXPLAINING A TECHNICAL POINT TO MR. ARNOLD HASKELL

There is also a large future for the person who can invent a small ensemble for cabaret or music hall.

Finally, there is a class of dancer that I have not yet dealt with because she is the exception.

In England concert dancing is quite exceptional; Argentina alone has appeared with real success. Economically on paper this form of dancing should have a future, dispensing as it does with the greatest expense of all, the orchestra, but in practice it is not the case. It requires un-

discipline. For one Duncan, a genius whom I will analyse in my historical survey of ballet, there are dozens of little girls who skip about in flowing drapery banging cymbals, and whose concerts are patronized by indulgent friends and relatives. The concert dancer, in fact, is as rare as the Ruth Draper or Cornelia Otis Skinner; her art is closely related to theirs. She is born rather than made, and it is an ambition that must be dismissed at once from the mind of the pupil. The stage encourages the brilliant individual, but

it thinks in terms of the team. The team must have its captain, but he, too, is part of a whole and is enhanced by the whole. The Pavlova of the *Dying Swan*, a concert dance, was only made possible by the Pavlova of *Giselle*, the most brilliant part of a whole of some hundred people,

standing could not get. This accident of numbers has all too often the most unfortunate effect of making the young male dancer so conceited that all progress in his work is rapidly at a standstill. As I write I can think of many promising careers ruined through such a cause. The damage is,



LEON WOZIKOVSKI IN COTILLON

Photo by Brewster

whose pattern led the eye to her. Also the ballet solo is so arranged that it comes to an end while the public is still entranced and awaiting more. The longest solo that I can think of lasts some four or five minutes.

In this economic consideration of dancing I have only hitherto considered the girl's chances. With regard to work in serious ballet, the position is much the same, with this difference, in favour of the boy pupil, that the number of male students is exceedingly small, so that there is often work to be had for a boy that a girl of the same ability and

however, still greater, for this inevitably prejudices people against the career of dancing for a man.

In the history of the ballet the male dancer fulfilled an important role until the advent of Taglioni, when he became merely a lifter, only to rise again into prominence with that genius Nijinsky, for it is invariably the dancer who dictates the lines that dancing is to take. It is safe to say that without Nijinsky *The Spectre of the Rose*, most beautiful of all male roles, would have been conceived for a woman. In the hey-

day of the Russian ballet, when there existed a galaxy of brilliant women, Petipas, the first modern choreographer, rarely set a prominent dance for a male in any of his ballets, where the male merely danced to rest his partner, to lift her, and to prepare her next triumphant entrance. The male was also entrusted with grotesque character parts and national dances.

It is with the Diaghileff régime, with Fokine and Nijinsky, that we have a succession of fine male roles: The Rose, The Moor in *Petrouchka*, The Fawn, the Mazurka in *Les Sylphides*, the Slave in *Sheherazade*, the Harlequin in *Carnaval*, etc. This greater predominance of the male was fully justified by its artistic results. It gave balance and contrast. There has always been in England considerable prejudice against the male dancer on the grounds of effeminacy. The effeminate male dancer is a bad dancer, and the great male dancer is a rarity. The fine male dancer must be as virile as the boxer or footballer, but, unlike either, his great strength must be hidden by graceful movement. His whole type of movement is a strong contrast to the woman's. In *Les Sylphides* it is true that he is longhaired and clad in a velvet jacket but the dance with its elevation is essentially masculine, while the clothes belong to a romantic conception. Hair was worn in that fashion in Florence at a period when men were exceedingly virile. The whole misconception is a confusion between romanticism and effeminacy. The monotony of the average pantomime ballet, where nothing but women appear, shows the absolute artistic necessity for the male. It was a stroke of genius to put the one man in *Les Sylphides* and so to turn the sentimental into the romantic.

The man, too, is invariably the creator in ballet, and with the exception of Nijinska, every Russian choreographer of note has been a man: Petipas, Fokine, Nijinsky, Massine, Balanchin. All have been dancers, and without them ballet would not exist.

There is an excellent career for the virile man, the true athlete, in ballet. For the effeminate there is no place at all.

The enthusiasm of the confirmed *balletomane*, a Russian portmanteau word for such people as the writer, may sound preposterous to the person who goes to the ballet as a light diversion after a

heavy dinner, but I maintain in all seriousness that the dancer has a mission far more important than to provide light entertainment, or even the laudable one of transporting an audience temporarily. *The dancer is the finest agent for fostering and propagating the musical and decorative arts of a country that exists at the present day.* At the risk of being a little dull I will give a shortened list of those famous painters and musicians, who have been made known to a wide public, through the instrumentality of dancers. The list is amazing, and is eloquent testimony to the permanent value of ballet to any country. It is also significant that during the past twenty-five years ballet, which was in former years the flighty young sister of opera, has appealed to the composer far more than opera as a medium of expression.

*Music.* Almost all the Russian music that is so popular to-day was brought to Western Europe on the "points" of Karsavina and her colleagues; by Fokine, Nijinsky and Massine. Rimsky Korsakov, Tcherepnin, Borodin, Igor Stravinsky, entirely a ballet discovery, Prokofiev. The French: Auric, Poulenc, Milhaud, and recently the English composers, Vaughan Williams (*Job*), Walton (*Façade*), Lambert (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Adam and Eve*, *Pomona*), Berners (*Triumph of Neptune*, *Luna Park*, etc.), Bliss (*Rout*), and there are many omitted for the sake of brevity.

*Art.* Alexandre Benois, one of the greatest theatrical designers of all time and inspirer of Bakst, who has played a role in heightening the colour scheme of theatrical and industrial art that is nothing short of revolutionary; Picasso who announced the far-reaching cubist revolution in the Ballet *Parade*, Derain, Matisse, Braque, and in fact the entire Paris School; in England, John Armstrong, Edward Wolfe, Vanessa Bell, Gwendolyn Raverat, Duncan Grant, Edward Burra, and that fine young scenic discovery, William Chappell.

A glance at such lists as these must make the dancer proud of his opportunities and must convince the layman that ballet is all-important, a living force in the art life of the nation.

Finally, it is necessary to stress that in order to bring about all this, a serious education is essential for the dancer since bad taste is a good deal easier to spread than good.



## HOW TO ORGANIZE YOUR PLAY

By CONSUELO M. DE REYES

*Producer, Little Theatre, Citizen House, Bath, and Everyman Theatre, Hampstead ;  
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THE organization of a producing group is an important factor in the process of play production. This is, of course, much easier if there is a permanent society. In a city the most successful organization is that which is

In a community group, younger and untried members can be started in "walking on" parts, or as understudies, and then advance as their art increases, until they are able to sustain big parts. They will both learn from their predecessors and



EXTERIOR OF STABLE GATES AT BETHLEHEM

Note effect of side lighting

connected with some institution, such as a church, college, or social club, since by identifying itself with a larger body, the group can draw upon a wider circle both for players and audience. Moreover, the full value of dramatic work can never be secured unless there is a permanent method of attracting and discovering ability and giving it a chance to grow; and it is just from the lack of this that the professional stage suffers.

teach their successors and in this manner a valuable and cumulative mass of group experience will be built up. It is always advisable for any group to provide itself from the start with full understudies and such players should not be considered as mere stand-bys in case of illness. A competent band of understudies provides an excellent nursery for actors. The best results may be obtained by treating them as alternative (rather

than under) studies, and by coaching them to production pitch. They are then expected to give one or more public performances, and in this way they have a definite point at which to aim, and their acting does not degenerate into the somewhat desultory effort that is so often associated with amateur understudies.

The form which the permanent organization

theatre. No group of actors can make a successful organization. For every single actor there should be two or three people who are interested in the art on the business side or in any of those activities that must come together in the full process of successful play production. Those who wish to act should report to the director and auditions will then be arranged. It is a good plan to follow



USE OF IMPRESSIONIST SCENERY AS EMPLOYED IN THE CAMBRIDGE FESTIVAL THEATRE, AND CITIZEN HOUSE, BATH

These blocks can be altered to afford different groupings. Note effect of light and shade

should take is just that which gives the widest possible scope to all the members, and for this purpose the membership should be as large as possible. It cannot be too clearly emphasized that it is in the kindred and associate arts of scene-design, costume-making, carpentry, painting, business management that the real strength of the Community Theatre, as opposed to the Professional Theatre lies, since it is in these that the Group Producer can effect a unity and purpose unknown on the commercial stage.

In an amateur society there should be room for everyone who evinces the slightest interest in the



IMPRESSIONIST SCENERY SHOWING ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENT

up auditions with an impromptu concert at which would-be actors are asked to give any single or concerted item on their own initiative. Frequently far better work is done on these occasions, since the formal air of tension is removed and in the general atmosphere of comradeship and team work many players do themselves much greater justice. If this can be arranged, it is wise to postpone casting until after the concert, when a more comprehensive view of the capabilities of the various players has been obtained. The chief requisite for success is a director who possesses the power of getting work out of others, and of going on with the play whatever happens. Such a director must have an intense love of the theatre, and he must be prepared to step into the place of anyone in his organization from the carpenter to



the chief actor. If the group is able to afford a producer who will cast and rehearse the play after the director has selected it such a method may result in better work, since the director will then be free to give his attention to the innumerable details of the various departments. In most cases,

playing has become a community art in which the players are only a part.

Any of these functions can be admirably filled by women who have organizing ability, initiative, and enthusiasm. It is certain that the carpenter and the property master will require a certain



SCENE FROM A PASSION PLAY, REPRESENTING THE CENTRAL FIGURE OF THE CRUCIFIED

Note how effect of height is gained by showing the feet only, and use of curtains twisted to represent tree trunks

however, the director will probably do his own staging and rehearsing.

In a fully organized Community Group the director has three staffs—the producing staff, the playing staff, and the house staff. The first includes all those engaged in the preparation of the play, the second is made up of actors, and the third consists of those who look after the theatre. The director will be wise to keep his producing staff for each production apart from the actors, since this will bring into his organization a number of keen people, who do not wish to act but who specialize in crafts that enhance the value of the finished work. In such manner

number of assistants, and even if a woman may not be found at the head of any of these departments, if she possesses a love of handcraft she is certain to be attracted to the group. Moreover, a wise director will gradually train up his own specialists. By allotting different branches of work to individuals and encouraging them to take a pride in their own department, excellent results can be secured. Frequently a knowledge of dyeing and of the use of vegetable dyes is of the greatest use in the theatre when special colour schemes are desired. Jewel-making and papier-mâché work are also invaluable to the group that is keen—as all self-supporting groups should be

—on building up its own wardrobe and property cupboard.

Again, stage make-up demands specialized study on the part of some individual, and frequently one with a strong artistic bent will find great pleasure in making pencil studies of many of the great portraits in the Picture Galleries, which will prove, in course of time, an invaluable book of reference.

The post of wardrobe mistress is usually given to a woman, and she will need a group of assistants. Few branches of work are more interesting and satisfying. Moreover, the work will win the entire gratitude of the actors and audience. A survey of costumes through the ages proves a fascinating subject, and here again the artist with a passion for research will prove invaluable. One of the first essentials is to make a Costume Book. Reproduction of all good plays in costume, pencil sketches of costume details taken from pictures, notes of colour and design jotted down after a visit to an Art Gallery, will all prove invaluable when the costumes for a period play have to be devised. Brass rubbings of dress designs and period costumes are of the greatest possible value. There are few old churches in this country that do not possess a brass of some wealthy squire or burgher, together with that of his spouse, splendidly arranged on a brass wrought with the greatest perfection of detail. These are invaluable also for the needlewoman and for the history teacher who desires to impart a full pictorial sense of the period.

Such is an outline of the organization towards

which a director who wishes to develop the community value of drama to the utmost will aim. Creative work, manual work, the joy of young and old in finding an outlet for their energy may all be combined in a single happy result, which will eventually be communicated to the audience, and thus achieve its final inspiration. Such a staff is not, of course, in the least indispensable. In a small group the director will frequently be his own stage manager, and often carpenter, property master, and electrician are the same hard-worked individual.

At the outset it is almost certain that economy in staff may have to be effected, but as the group grows, it is well to remember that as much of the work as possible should be delegated. This will strengthen the public spirit of the company and give an abiding interest to the individual members.

The social side of the group must not be overlooked. Impromptu debates, discussions, and informal gatherings will bring members of various departments together in a way that the mere routine of work could never effect. If the director can find it, the company should always have an unused room—an attic or some corner of the basement—where rehearsals, debates, and work parties can be held. Old programmes and photographs hung on the walls will give a sense of continuity, and prove an incentive to further work, while “a tea kettle and a tin of biscuits will bring to actors and craftsmen those golden days that we come upon so rarely in life and which once experienced, we never forget.”

# THE FORMATION OF AN AMATEUR SOCIETY—I

By H. P. HOLLINGDRAKE

GOOD Mrs. Beeton in her excellent book of cookery recipes was ever careful to leave little to chance in the ingredients she deemed necessary for the proper composition of her culinary masterpieces, except it might be some simple seasonings "to taste." We shall do well to be equally careful to omit or overlook no essential or desirable ingredient in the formation of an amateur operatic or dramatic society; and it is the purpose here to offer to those who may have such a project in mind some helpful suggestions that have been proved by the test of long experience.

It will be convenient to assume that an operatic society is contemplated, as, although some modifications in detail may be possible in the case of a dramatic society, the principle remains the same. For example, an operatic society usually gives one big production for six nights once a year in a fully equipped theatre, whereas a dramatic society may give one or more plays for three nights apiece in a suitable hall with a fit-up stage. Hence the formation of an operatic society with a personnel of 50 or 60 acting members is a much larger and more costly venture than that of a dramatic society, and requires handling on a larger scale. It is a matter of proportion and not of principle.

The two main ingredients are, beyond any question, first the amateur artists themselves or a nucleus from which a group or society could be developed; and, second, an adequate number of local persons willing or anxious to support them financially. The vital need for this second ingredient cannot be too strongly emphasized. These two essentials must exist before any progress or development is possible, and it would not be profitable to discuss which of the two is the greater—for if one be the greater the other must be the lesser; better that they should be deemed equal and interdependent. That is to say, and to lay down as an axiom, that unless there is suffi-

cient talent available of a quality that collectively under competent coaching would merit the support of the public, or, on the other hand, assuming the talent is available, unless the public support expressed in terms of annual subscriptions is adequate, the project should be abandoned.

It will be noted that in defining the word talent to mean talent of definite stage value and of definite box-office value, the qualification has been induced by the knowledge that the public of our time resents, and refuses to support entertainments of inferior merit and has long since demanded performances from the amateur which, in their ensemble of *décor* and technique, are only excelled by the London stage itself. Hence, to adapt to the subject Sir Richard Terry's aphorism on singing, there is a great distinction between the urge to act and the ability to act, and it is only those who have highly developed both the urge and the ability who are seriously to be considered.

Assume now that the talent is available and that diplomatic inquiries have revealed some measure of interest amongst the leading citizens and notables of the town with promises of support; the next step must be the tentative inception of the society by means of a resolution passed at an *ad hoc* meeting of persons *invited to attend* by the promoters of the venture, one of whom would act as temporary secretary. This method has a great advantage over an advertised town's meeting in that it excludes the almost predictable election of a committee composed of utterly useless people, or at all events the wrong people. The resolution might well be in this form—

*"That it is desirable to establish an amateur operatic (dramatic) society in (name of town) and that, subject to adequate financial support being secured by the registration of annual subscribers, this meeting pledges itself thereto."*

If that resolution is carried, it should be further resolved whether or not the society is to be constituted upon a charitable basis; that is to say, are *the whole* of the profits from its performances to be devoted to charities; if not, no exemption from Entertainments Duty can be obtained.

The selection of the first committee is of the greatest importance and the utmost care should be given to it. Opinions may differ as to the wisdom of making definite appointments at the preliminary meeting. But, provided there are available persons of known ability and energy for the work that lies ahead, it would seem to be prudent to enrol them at once with power to add such others as may be deemed desirable if and when the project matures.

The preliminary meeting would then be adjourned for three weeks or a month to enable the secretary (*pro tem.*) to draw up a circular letter setting out the aims and objects of the proposed society and inviting the addressee to become an annual subscriber. It should be pointed out that until the response to the invitations is known no further progress can be made, and a definite date should be fixed for the receipt of replies. The letter should bear the names, as signatories, of the chairman of the preliminary meeting and the secretary *pro tem.*, and have a tear-off slip at the foot suitably printed for the use of the addressee.

As this article is written with a keen desire to make it helpful in small as well as large matters, and as the success of the venture depends entirely upon the success of the appeal letter, a few general hints to the secretary will not be out of place at this point. To be effective the letter should have what is known as "pull"—that is, it must have a personal appeal to the recipient. Begin your first sentence and most of the others with the word "you" and not "I" or "We," and use short paragraphs instead of long ones. Let it be either printed, in clear plain type from one fount for all sizes of letter, or Roneo'd on good, but not expensive, paper, quarto, or foolscap size. Letter postage (1½d.) should be paid. The extra cost will be money well spent. So much advertising matter, catch-penny proposals, "accounts rendered," and other distressing printed circulars are daily delivered through letter boxes that scant attention, if any, is given to halfpenny or penny

postal "junk." Your letter will be useless unless the recipient reads it. Remember, too, that there is a right and a wrong time for the posting and receipt of letters, and if in doubt, put yourself into the position of the addressee and view the problem from *his* angle. For instance, the circular letter you propose to send out is in the nature of a begging letter; at all events, it is a request for a money subscription. Clearly, it would be unfortunate if it was delivered to a business man at the end of a tiresome day. Letters of this kind should arrive by the first morning delivery and, for choice, in the middle of a week.

To illustrate, the appeal letter might be worded thus—

Dear Sir (or Madam),

You may be interested to hear of a movement in the town to form an amateur operatic society to present annually at the ..... Theatre a musical play or light opera with a full company of local principals and chorus.

The disappearance of professional touring companies since the advent of the cinema places upon amateurs the responsibility in the provinces of saving the living stage from extinction, and it is with the desire to take part in that effort that the present project originated.

You will realize, however, that to establish a society of this kind on a sound basis adequate support must be assured; already we have many promises, including His Worship the Mayor, Sir..... Dr. .... (etc., etc.), and we are still further encouraged by a unanimous resolution passed at a preliminary meeting held at ..... on ..... that an operatic society should be formed, provided support be forthcoming.

May we, therefore, invite you to join us by becoming an annual subscriber to the society, if or when formed, and to be good enough to signify your decision on the attached slip not later than.....

Yours faithfully,

.....  
Chairman of the Preliminary Meeting.

.....  
Hon. Secretary (*pro tem.*).  
.....

I am (am not) willing to become an annual subscriber to the proposed.....Amateur Operatic Society of an amount not exceeding £ s. d. which will entitle me to booked seats to that value in each year.

Name (Mr., Mrs. or Miss) . . . . .

Address . . . . .

. . . . .





MR. T. G. WILLIAMS

(2477)

Fr.

# ACTED DRAMA AS AN EDUCATIONAL INSTRUMENT

By T. G. WILLIAMS, M.A., F.R.Hist.S.

SINCE Mr. Granville Barker in 1921 "drafted a bill" for an Exemplary Theatre, and in the preamble urged the educational claims of acting in schools, much light has flooded the boards of the amateur stage. "You don't expect me," said his Minister of Education to the Man of the Theatre in *The Exemplary Theatre*, "to encourage you to go round muddling up my teachers' minds . . . with talk about the civic importance of the theatre, and the psychological necessity for the development of the histrionic instinct in children. I enjoy a good play, well-acted; so do they. Don't spoil it for us. I admit a certain absolute educative value in music. I haven't yet admitted it in the drama, have I?" "If you didn't teach some form of drama in schools," retorted the M. of T., "you couldn't teach anything at all . . . But I'll promise to be not at all exigent about what you do teach as long as you'll give it its rightful name, and not disguise it as gymnastics, or as some Cinderella branch of literature."

What then are the educational claims of acted drama, as distinct from the recreational? The question can be asked without conveying any implication that the former transcend the latter, and without suggesting a false dichotomy of school activity. Leisure is the budding time of the human spirit, when the sap rises and feeds the swelling fruit-buds. It has claims on youth that are neglected only at the risk of a warped and stunted personality, an "expense of spirit in a waste of shame." But notwithstanding this, the claims of recreation are capable of being distinguished from those that belong to the more formal and systematic activities of school life, and the question now to be considered is what place the study of drama, approached not as a literary form but in action and practice, may claim to hold in the educative process.

Looked at from the individual standpoint, the

values of acted drama are to be found in an acquired illumination and an inward endowment. "Not to know the relative disposition of things is the state of slaves or children," wrote Newman; "to have mapped out the Universe is the boast, or at least the ambition, of Philosophy." The Universe to be mapped out by the actor is the universe of experience, of character, of incident, of situation, of human relationships, of emotion. He studies the interplay of human ambitions, the breadth and the depth of love and jealousy and cruelty and misunderstanding. He explores the springs of human folly, and seeks to find the fountains of laughter and of joy. His Universe includes the vast regions above and below the plane of conscious living, which he investigates by eliminating from the totality of effects those that arise from the known and calculable aspects of experience, and considering only the remainder. Those psychic and spiritual aspects of experience that form so large a part of life, being inward and personal, press for outward concrete interpretation with an even greater insistence than the actual and the factual as they appear in the light of common day.

There is an important element of truth in the assertion that the only interpretation possible for an actor is the interpretation of himself, that he cannot get outside his own skin. The Hamlet or the Caliban that he renders is the Hamlet-constituent or the Caliban-constituent of his own organic self. According to this view, all acting is self-expression. But there is here need for caution, since every virtue has the defect of its quality. Self-expression may easily pass over into self-assertion, and the urge to be "individual" may encourage the development of affected mannerisms. An acting technique that is merely imitative may well lead to such unfortunate results. But where there is a high sensibility and intelligence there can be no danger; for no satisfaction can be got

by an actor capable of genuine feeling and independent thought from the act of presenting the merely external aspects of a character. His expression, if it is to be of *himself*, and yet of the playwright's creation, demands that a process of alchemy in the crucible of the mind should have been carried out to its conclusion.

Consider what this process is.

The actor, in the preliminary study of his part, applies his intelligence to probe deeply into the thoughts and emotions of the character, and to reflect these thoughts and feelings in words and tones that seem to echo them. With every repetition of his part in rehearsal he reaches to a finer understanding and appreciation of it, to a closer identity with it, and to a more perfect articulation of his own movement and utterance with the rest of the action. Eventually, in a moment of intense excitement, when the sensibility is caught up to a pitch of illumination that clarifies and simplifies all as in a lightning flash, the personation that the actor is attempting passes over into experience, the emotion formerly simulated is now felt, and his voice, his gestures, his countenance reflect no longer a merely feigned and counterfeit motion of the spirit; rather do they now "show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." Thereupon, when the moment of excitement is passed, the mind as intelligence looks back in silence and repose upon its experience as upon an emotion recollected in tranquillity, reflects upon the incident or the situation that gave birth to it, and works it up as an element in consciousness.

There is here a full and complete synthesis of mental states. The active principle of the actor's will first directs and focuses attention on a character, a situation, an incident. The intelligence subjects it to an analysis, a reconstruction, to lay bare the plan and purpose of it, its motivation, its relationships. Finally, the actor, usually in a flash, apprehends the part emotionally. In that instant he adds something to his experience; the horizons of his life are extended; his mind has become a more sensitive instrument of living; his capacity for volition, for thought, and for feeling is increased. In other words, he has developed his personality and added to the stature of his humanity.

Hitherto we have been considering only the personal values to be derived from the effort to interpret a part in an acted play. But the social values are not to be overlooked. If we regard the matter from the standpoint of the school as a community, one of the most important features of play production is the opportunity it presents and the demand it makes for co-operative effort. The art of drama is composite, requiring for its highest expression a contribution from all the arts. Its appeal is at once to the eye and the ear, to the intellect, the emotions, and the imagination. It calls for an understanding of the principles of architectural composition and structural design, pattern and colour, speech and music, dance and rhythmical movement. The artistic crafts are summoned to lend their aid in a hundred directions, and in theatrical technique no practical expedient that scientific invention suggests is overlooked.

All these are contributory to the effort of giving concrete presentation to a discernment of truth and beauty arising in the mind of the playwright and expressed in words according to certain accepted conventions governing dramatic form and stage performance. In the establishment of such conventions of the theatre ideally every collaborator is concerned to an equal degree: the scene designer, the stage mechanic, the electrician, the maker-up, the costumier, the librarian, the musician, the producer, the actors, the playwright. There is here no hierarchy, no aristocracy. The theatre is a commonwealth of equal participants.

It follows, therefore, that the practice of acted drama has a powerful social influence. It has been pointed out that music, poetry, and painting are arts that can come to their fullest expression in communication from one solitary mind to another. They are "mono-emotional." But inasmuch as acted drama calls for the co-working in one place and to one end of so many people behind the scenes, on the stage, and "in the front of the house," with many contributory endeavours in the same direction extending over weeks or perhaps months previously, drama is unrivalled among the arts as a stimulant of social activity. It requires, moreover, if it is to produce its full effects, a charged atmosphere, such as often results from the assemblage of a number of people in receptive mood and for the moment in a state



of "release." But it is not only on the day of a performance that the harvest of social values in acted drama is garnered. In all the preparatory work the same influences have been operative, uniting and cementing, breaking down reserves and inhibitions, building up loyalties, sympathies, and traditions.

Furthermore, drama gives opportunity for education by "doing," and engages more fully

speculate, in the intense illumination of imaginative acting presents no difficulty at all. The study of Dramatic Literature—drama, so to speak, in repose—will yield its own values, but these are not to be confused with the values that are to be derived from the study of drama in and through action. The former are mainly intellectual and critical values, the product of direct reason, patiently acquired by the use of the logical pro-



THE LITTLE THEATRE  
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than any other educational device the activity of the pupil. But here we must distinguish sharply between acted drama and drama as literature. It is no more consonant with the nature of drama that it should be studied only by means of the printed word than that a sonata should be read silently from a score. No play will yield a tithe of the dramatic values that it possesses unless it is interpreted in action. A play begins to render up its meaning only when it is reflected back to an audience through the mind of the actor, as the richness of light is perceived only when it is "fractured" in a prism. Many an obscure passage in a Shakespearean play, on which commentators

cesses of analysis, classification, comparison. The viewpoint is detached, and the values are expressed in terms of objective knowledge. The latter are principally aesthetic and dynamic values, depending on emotional response, limited by subjective factors, and emerging as creative impulse.

It is also important to distinguish between the practice of the art of acted drama, in conformity with the established conventions of stage technique on the one hand, and the use of dramatization as a method of teaching on the other. The distinction lies principally in the end in view. In the dramatization, for example, of historical episodes as a method of impressing facts, the purpose is not

artistic at all. There is no subjective experience clamouring for aesthetic expression. There is no emotional exaltation. Dramatization is a merely practical adaptation of means to an end, like the manipulation of a pair of compasses to describe a circle of a given diameter. The teacher's purpose in dramatizing the incidents of the story of Wat Tyler or of the Five Members or of Florence Nightingale is to impress facts on the memory through a medium other than the printed book, and to vivify history by making it visual. In dramatization we have certainly most of the raw materials of dramatic art: dialogue, properties, costume, setting, gesture, characterization. But though many of the elements of dramatic technique are employed, they are combined in a totally different way. Little attention is paid, for example, to design or plot, since it is the succession of incident that is of greatest moment, and dramatization generally proceeds on the line of a chronicle. Moreover, there is as a rule no audience, and the essential aspect of art as communication is therefore absent.

For a long time past, educationists have stressed the importance of learning through activity, and the trend of recent research in psychology confirms the view that the learning process is extremely complex. Books are useful only up to a point; knowledge derived from books or acquired with the aid of books has to be followed by the adjustment of individuality to the external world of natural objects, of human society, and of the moral order. These three worlds, nature, society, and morality, every man has to explore, and to bring into relation with each other and to his own self before he can be said to be educated. The process of adjustment we call experience, and it consists partly in organizing the subjective life in relation to a given external environment and in moulding this environment to forms that answer to the demands of the subjective life. In childhood, adolescence, and manhood the adjustment proceeds continuously in all three directions at once. The effort involves the discipline of trial and error; it calls for the employment of every function of conscious life, willing, thinking, feeling. The new shaping of the environment is a creative act, guided by imagination, and requiring often the exercise of practical skill. Only thus may the system of the three worlds of ex-

ternal nature, human relationships, and the moral order be understood and organically related to the self.

The study of acted drama is unrivalled as a basis for this many-sided activity. It helps to give the student command of language, the most important medium of communication, and supplies him with standards of excellence in the adjustment of language to thought and sensibility that we call literature. It trains him in the art of speech, perhaps of all elements of his everyday social conduct that which is of greatest moment, inasmuch as it sets its stamp indelibly upon him and fits or mars him for certain activities in society. Furthermore, the stage is a school in which the actor can study human conduct in a thousand varied aspects. He can enter into a world of passions and sorrows and ambitions lying outside the narrow orbit of his own experience. Thereby his vision is enlarged and his sensibilities are quickened. The actor is constantly cultivating his aesthetic appreciation, schooling his taste and deepening his perceptions of the harmonies of colour, sound, and form. He aims, too, at physical fitness achieved through strict observance of the laws of personal hygiene. He learns how to achieve poise of body and of spirit, expressed in the balanced rhythm and economy of movement and in a vigorous co-ordination of mood, gesture, and speech.

There is no device in educational method that gives greater scope than acted drama for the exercise of imagination. Every play is an essay in interpretation. Into this interpretation must enter the personality of the actor, his conception of character and incident formed by a study of the play, and the means he has devised for embodying the conception in forms belonging to theatrical art so that the play may "get across." This is a complex task demanding imaginative insight into the efficacy of symbols and conventions, the limits of naturalism, and the adaptation of means to ends. While the skilful actor never forgets that he has an audience that is potentially a partner in the creation of illusion, he uses every device that his imagination suggests in order to facilitate acceptance of his lath and canvas box as a parcel of the hard core of the world. He must understand the laws of perspective and architectural structure so that no disproportion may

detract from the illusion. He must study colour values in relation to costume and lighting. In a hundred directions, he may utilize any mechanical skill he may possess in designing and making properties that will help the interpretation he wishes to suggest.

In conclusion, acted drama belongs not to any one stage in the educational process, but to all. It is just as much in place in the nursery as in the Secondary School, in the University as in the Evening Institute. For its material is human life and the means it employs are the specifically human attributes of speech and gesture, thought and emotion. By these means the "ego" expresses itself and adjusts itself to its surroundings: two functions that are necessary for its very existence.

It remains to consider the place of acted drama in the curriculum of an educational institution. An initial practical difficulty lies in the fact that school grading is usually an horizontal stratification. The more homogeneous the constitution of a particular form of boys or girls in intellectual ripeness and personal qualities, the less varied the material available for the purposes of acted drama. For ordinary teaching purposes this horizontal stratification is expedient; for acted drama a vertical stratification might be preferable. A group, the members of which were diversified in age and physique and mental development, would provide greater possibilities of suitable casting. From this it follows that the unit for the successful practice of acted drama is the whole school rather than the single form.

There is the further difficulty of computing quantitatively or qualitatively the results of a given year's study of "drama in action" in, say, the Upper Fourth. In this respect it is unlike

"French" or "Mathematics." There are no scales in which to weigh achievement, and anyhow the values at which the teaching should aim are for the most part comprised of imponderables. Furthermore, the art of drama being practised co-operatively, individual achievement has no meaning apart from the performance of a group. Certain of the difficulties, e.g. the over-crowded time-tables, the inexperience of the average form-

master or class-teacher in play production, the large size of the classes, the lack of empty floor space in the class-room, are capable of being removed, and are already absent in the design and the organization of some up-to-date schools. But in general such disabilities are so formidable that they effectually keep acted drama out of the "educational" time-table, and cause it to be relegated to the status of an extraneous and semi-recreational or even ceremonial activity. It is possible that most school plays produced for some annual occasion have been selected by a member of the staff with

a view to the parent public that is to be pleased than to the pupils who are to be trained. For the annual play stands as a rule in no organic relation to the school curriculum, and few of the hard-riden form masters or mistresses can, out of the couple of "periods" a week in which they have to cover an examination syllabus, afford time to rehearse a play, and to distil patiently from it the values that it may possess for a liberal education. The preparation of the play may have a considerable social value for the pupil-players, who are thereby brought into a new relation with their teachers, but there is, in the conditions of average school life, little possibility of developing the practice of amateur acting and accumulating the resources available to the



THE LATE REV. STEWART D. HEADLAM

players as there is, for example, in amateur dramatic societies with an adult membership.

In contrast with the slower advance of the practice of acted drama in the day schools, the growing interest in acted drama in Evening Institutes is most marked. In the conditions of modern business life, opportunity for an individual interpretation of experience is usually denied. Work for livelihood is for most people mechanized, standardized, and rationalized. No personal reactions can as a rule be permitted to disturb the smooth dispatch of business or factory routine. But at the end of every business day there comes release, and the spirit naturally seeks a freer *milieu* in which personal choice and original interpretation is possible. The acting drama class in the Evening Institute provides this opportunity more readily than any other organization.

Whether in Junior or Senior Evening Institutes the classes formed for the study of acted drama consist of students who have voluntarily selected this aspect of study rather than another out of the general time-table of courses. They have done so because they are already drawn to the drama and have for one reason or another come to look upon the study and the practice of it as answering to the particular need of which they are conscious. A fortuitous assembly of such people will quickly, under the tactful handling of an expert instructor, gather up a corporate enthusiasm. Meeting for a common and well-understood purpose, there are fewer competing claims on time and energy to be resisted. Usually there is sufficient directing and administrative capacity available in the group to which definite functions can be delegated. Moreover, the material is diversified. There are wide limits of age,

social experience, powers of speech and general knowledge, and usually there are varieties of developed skill in the arts and crafts ready to be called upon for service. Work on the play is usually part of the activity of a class that is engaged on the study of Dramatic Literature, and is included as an integral part of the syllabus. The class meets normally for two hours weekly throughout a session of, say, thirty-six weeks. There is time for a pretty thorough study of dramatic structure, literary values, social and other implications of the play, and the place of the play in the evolution of dramatic technique. The students are meantime being trained in proper habits of speech production, and are using the play as a basis for their exercises. Furthermore, the "dramatic class" is an important focus of the social life of the Institute, and its productions offer occasion for pleasant foregatherings of the general body of the students and their friends.

The important place that acted drama has come to occupy in the curriculum of the Evening Institute is due principally to the advocacy of the late Rev. Stewart D. Headlam, who was convinced of the cultural value of the theatre and of its importance as a religious, social, and educational force. He fought down the prejudice that regarded play-acting as degenerate idling, and contributed greatly to the renaissance of popular drama that has been so marked a feature of national life in recent years. The introduction of the study of acted drama, and particularly of Shakespeare, into the Evening Institutes of London is directly traceable to his championship of its claims, and the Stewart Headlam Shakespeare Association of London is a fitting memorial to his courageous espousal of the cause.

*T. B. Williams*

## DESIGNING THE INTERIOR

By HAL D. STEWART

*Author of "Rizzio's Boots," "The Blind Eye," etc.*

**B**ROADLY speaking, there are two types of stage design—realistic and non-realistic. The realistic school endeavours to hold the mirror up to nature and to give an actual reproduction on the stage of the locality that the scene is intended to portray. The non-realistic school indicates what it portrays by broad effects, and creates an impression of the desired locality without actually reproducing it. The former may be compared to a photograph, and the latter to a modern oil painting; and as modern paintings vary so that some are readily appreciated by the layman, and others, of an extreme impressionistic nature, cannot be understood except by an artist, so do non-realistic settings vary in manner and degree.

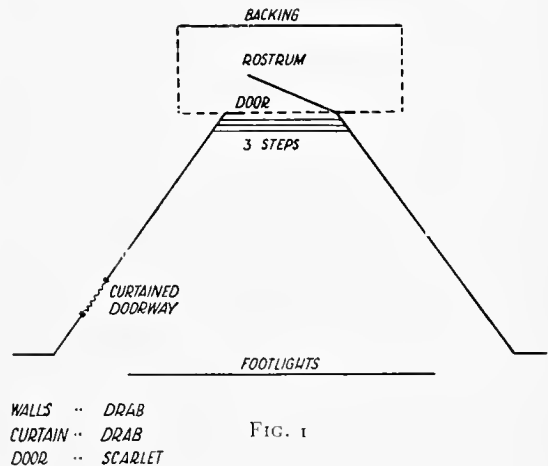
Art students are, as a rule, drawn towards the non-realistic school, and may be tempted to design impressionistic scenery whether such a design would be in key with the spirit of the play or not. The temptation must be resisted. The set is not a work of art in itself. It has no meaning apart from the play, and however clever the design may be, if it is at odds with the spirit of the play, it is a bad design.

The ambitious art student, starting his career as designer for an amateur dramatic group, may be discouraged at first because the majority of the plays that amateurs produce call for realistic treatment. This should not be so. The idea that realistic scenery requires little skill or imagination on the part of the designer is quite mistaken. There is a real art in designing quite ordinary interior settings, and there are many different ways in which a realistic interior may be made fresh and attractive.

To begin with, it must be remembered that photographic accuracy is not always called for, and is often not desirable. Stagecraft is an art of exaggeration. The average stage is larger than the average room. The actor must talk in a louder voice than is usual in conversation, and use gestures that are more decided than the

normal. This is even the case in the modern "intimate" school of acting round which so much controversy rages. Faces must be painted to accentuate the features and to counteract the heavy shadows cast by lighting that is abnormally bright. All this has to be done so that everything may appear natural to the audience.

Similarly, exaggeration is necessary to make a realistic set appear natural. A backcloth, for instance, might appear to be excellent when viewed



from a distance of a few feet, but prove to be quite inadequate when seen from the auditorium. At this distance small details will be lost, and only bold lines will be effective.

The realistic interior should be designed so that it will immediately appear to the audience to be the appropriate room for the scene that is to be played within it. Do not use the leaded diamond shaped panes that one sees in country cottages for the window of a London flat. The leaded panes may be much more artistic and pleasanter to look at, but they will strike the wrong note. If the room belongs to an old-fashioned family with Victorian views, do not have the bright green walls and scarlet doors that one might find in an

ultra-modern apartment. This may sound obvious, but similar, if less glaring, errors are by no means infrequent.

In a naturalistic setting it is extremely important to pay attention to the smallest detail,

One method of doing this is to concentrate on one or two salient features that give the key to the whole scene. This method, which was used by Rheinhardt, is tending away from realism, but it can be used with great effect in many cases

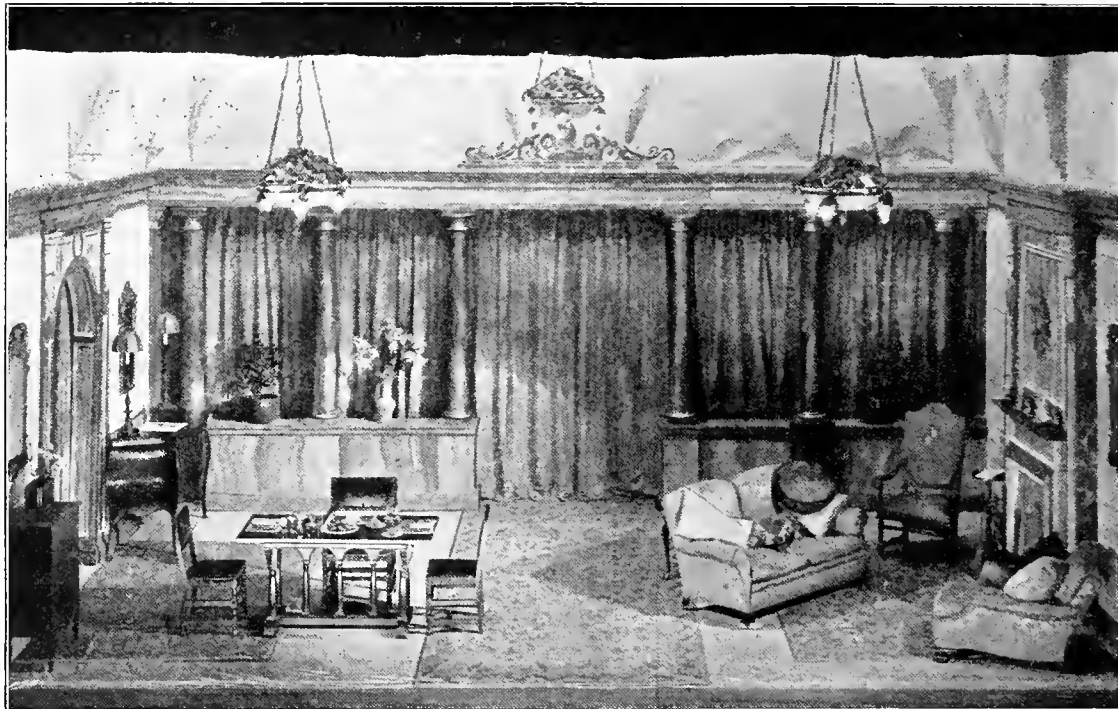


FIG. 2. "THE DOVER ROAD"

By courtesy of the Management of the Haymarket Theatre

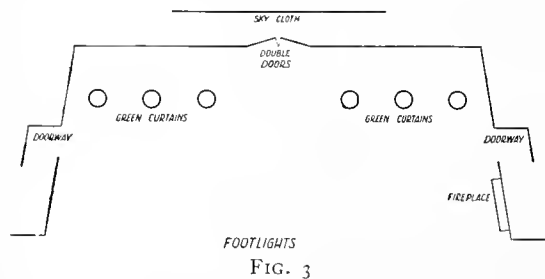
always provided that it is one that can be seen by the audience. At the same time, avoid being fussy. It is a mistake to have so many details that

where a more or less realistic setting is necessary. It is particularly useful in a play where there are many scenes and quick changes.

Fig. 1 shows the ground plan of a set that was designed in this manner. The play was *The House with the Twisty Windows* by Mary Pakington. The scene is laid in the cellar of a house in Moscow during the terror. The cellar is used as a prison for a number of English political prisoners, who, throughout the play, are keyed up to a very high pitch.

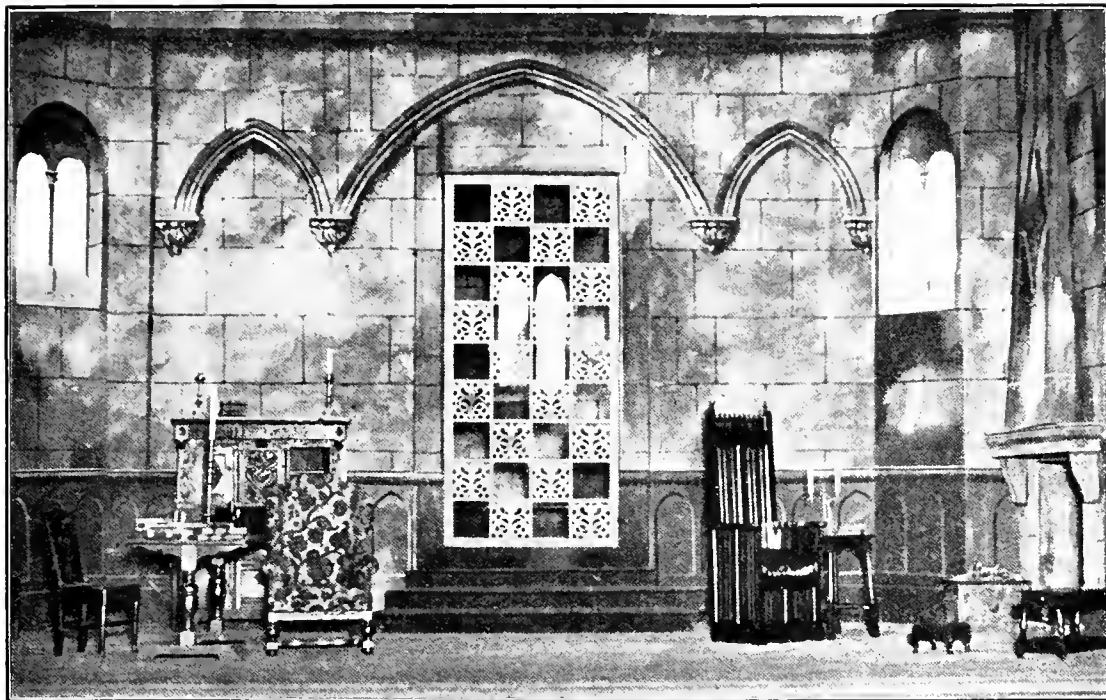
The important feature in the room was the door, behind which much took place and which was constantly being opened to admit one or other of the characters. Each opening of the door was significant.

The walls of the set were painted a drab colour, and the door a bright scarlet. The facts that the



the audience cannot take them in. The aim of the designer should always be to strike a certain note that will be appreciated whenever the curtain rises.





*Photo kindly lent by William Armstrong*

FIG. 4. "COUNT ALBANY"  
Designed by William Armstrong and Augustus Trout



*Photo kindly lent by William Armstrong*

FIG. 5. QUINCE'S HOUSE FROM "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"  
Designed by Philip Gough

door was placed at the apex of a triangle, that it was on a rostrum, with steps leading up to it, and that it was of such a conspicuous colour, tended to rivet the attention of the audience upon it from the moment the play started. This was the effect that the producer wished to make.

Fig. 2, which shows the stage of the Haymarket Theatre set for the performance of *The Dover Road*, by A. A. Milne, is a fairly typical example of a realistic interior setting. For those who do not know the play it is sufficient to say that it deals with the vagaries of a certain Mr. Latimer, a rich old gentleman with the eccentric hobby of enticing eloping couples to his house and holding them prisoner there until they have had an opportunity to discover whether or not they really wish to elope after all. The whole play takes place in this room—the entrance hall of Mr. Latimer's house. While the play is a comedy there is an almost sinister atmosphere at times, and the whole story is fantastic and whimsical. It is thus a case in which the setting may be treated realistically or otherwise. To point the difference between the two methods, Fig. 3 shows the ground plan of a different setting for the same play.

This design has purple draperies for walls (the purple being a rich, deep, reddish shade), a large, rather fantastic green fireplace, and a line of

bunched green draperies, which give the impression of pillars, and are hung about three feet downstage from the back wall.

It is a matter of opinion as to which is the more effective setting, but both are appropriate to the spirit of the play.

Fig. 4 is an interesting example of a realistic interior where a particular feature is stressed. In this case it is again the door, but here the whole setting is entirely realistic and the door achieves prominence by reason of a design that is striking but absolutely in keeping with the rest of the scene. This prominence is again accentuated by its position and by the steps leading up to it. This photograph is the setting for *Count Albany* by Donald Carswell, produced by the Liverpool Repertory Company. The set was designed by William Armstrong and Augustus Trout.

Fig. 5, which shows another design from the same theatre, affords a complete contrast. This setting for Quince's House in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was designed by Philip Gough, and is frankly non-realistic. It demonstrates admirably the effectiveness of bold and economical design.

The important point to notice, however, about all these illustrations is that each set was in harmony with the spirit of the play in which it was used. This is the absolute essential of successful stage design.



## SUCCESS IN ARTISTRY

By F. E. DORAN

*Secretary, Manchester Playgoers Club*

IT might be asked why the producer should have to go to all the trouble of looking after measurements of stage, position and shape of furniture, colour of scenery and lighting, and nature of materials. Is not his job to bring out the talent of the actor and direct him here and there so that each member of the cast fits in to the general idea? This is his job, certainly, but so is the other, because these things are all part of the same whole and must be considered as part of the same problem. The producer is the most important member of the team, being coach, referee, and rule *maker* all in one. His status is one of command and direction, and he must be equipped with knowledge as well as *flair*. He must be as patient as Job, as energetic as a beaver, as far-seeing as any prophet, have the organizing genius of a Ford, and possess the tact of an archangel. His cast must be loyal and unselfish and give the producer credit for knowing what he wants, and appreciate that when certain things are asked for there is a reason for it. So while the producer's lot is not a happy one, until the show is launched it is a responsible one, and his cast and staff must each pull its weight.

It all depends on the personnel of a society what staff a producer should have, but his minimum is a stage manager, prompter, electrician, and "props" or stage carpenter. To these a wardrobe mistress, a maker-up, assistant stage manager, and others as convenient may be added, and I would advise that once appointed, and the producer's plans given to them, the producer should leave them to their own initiative to build up the detail. This leaves him free to give all his energies to the rehearsals of his cast.

It is at rehearsals that he will build up his ideas. Perhaps, in fact usually, the idea that seemed so effective in the mind's eye of original invention is totally unsuitable when tested out life-size, and, impromptu as it were, the producer must evolve some spontaneous solution that fits in with the ideas being carried into effect elsewhere.

It may be that one wrong detail, if persisted in, is found to make all that follows wobbly and uncertain in effect. It is important, therefore, that the producer's mind should not be hampered by the execution of detail when once his plan is satisfactory, and that his staff should work with him and for him. His cast must also respond and fall into the general picture as presented by the producer, working up their own talent into the detail required to make their own particular part good *in relation to the whole*.

This human, or personal, element must be examined in two parts: (1) The individual actor; (2) the crowd or super element. The individual actor is the key of the play as seen by the audience. Audiences hardly know of the producer, still less are they able to separate his work from that of the actor. But it is the producer's idea, and the actor's carrying out of it that produce the great moment, particularly in modern plays, where an idea, rather than a story, is the gravamen of the piece. The individual actor has a duty to himself and his talent and a duty to the producer. It is as though each actor was a note on a keyboard—individual, particular, separate; of no consequence alone, but when brought into an arrangement by the player on the keyboard, then the place in the scale of things becomes manifest, and the actor's particular note must be presented not too loud, or soft, or out of key. If error is made, either producer or actor may be at fault. Therefore, it is necessary, for the art of the theatre, that the producer should know the details of his job. His cast, and particularly his leads, must have confidence in him. An actor may have his own ideas about the playing of a part, and if these are in conflict with the producer, the actor will only give way with ease if he has confidence that the producer knows what he is about.

The individual actor must be able to help the producer by being able to carry out his desires without coaching. It is not the business of a producer to waste too much time on teaching his

leads how to kneel, or walk, or gesticulate. That is elementary, and should be learned in crowd work or away from rehearsals. The producer is the fusing element, and his requirements as to turning, gesture, emphasis, and so on should be at the actor's command; not have to be pumped into him (or her) while the rest of the cast hang round watching the elaboration of a detail that should come spontaneously.

In many cases the desire for leading parts is greater than the ability to play them, and many a show has been spoiled through artistic impetuosity. There are many aspirants to leading fame who do not lift a finger between shows, and sometimes not even between rehearsals, to improve their technical knowledge. Others are so busy hopping from part to part, society to society, that they are learning as they go, but never reflecting on what they should have learnt. This is what produces the "quick study," but never an actor-artist, for such a one will always be himself. Mannerisms will abound, make-up may vary, but movement and intonations never. Such an amateur will never *act* a part, only play it. Whereas if only one or two summers, 'tween seasons, had been spent in studying basic principles, we would see all the difference. Gone would be that wagging head whenever lines have to be said. Gone would be that awkwardness of the hands and feet, gone would be that constraint when a long silence has to be gone through. One who has trained himself by precept and observation will never be *afraid*. He will have the consciousness of ability to do what is required of him, and his artistic success will be a matter of degree. Some parts will be better than others because the individual is more *en rapport* with the part; but when the actor is trained a performance will always be competent.

#### HELPING THE PRODUCER

I am writing thus, not to damp ardour, or to present success in artistry as an impossible or extremely difficult goal, but I am stating that individuals in a cast have a duty to their producer, and that a competent actor, by contributing competence, helps the producer to an exceptional degree. In other words, beginners should seek to walk before they run away with the big parts.

Apart from individual tuition, good practice can be obtained in crowd work. The management of his crowd is one of the signs of a good producer, particularly on small stages. In musical comedy work the chorus is not so difficult, as not much harm is done if the crowd form a perfect semi-circle, or get too much bunched up in one place. But in drama, particularly tragedy, the crowd can make or mar.

#### CROWDS

In general, avoid any suggestion that there are more people than the stage should hold. See that entrances and exits are wide enough to allow easy movement of the crowd. If necessary, have many small exits, rather than one congested one, so that many exits at one time will leave the stage clear. A great offence is the "hang-over." When a crowd exit has to be made for a solo entrance, do not allow lingering so that the entrance coincides with the last flutter of the last skirt. Make it clear cut. "*Exit Omnes*" must be done quicker than said, and only when the stage is definitely empty should the pause before the vital entrance be counted. The hang-over is usually caused by the feeling of time. A second or two to the man waiting his entrance is like five minutes, and while in the wings, keyed up, it seems ages before the crowd gets off, and when he sees a reasonable clearance he wants to prevent a stage wait. His entrance is premature and the effect is woolly and uncertain. We cannot blame the actor. A producer must account for that sort of urge, and get his crowd off with a click, as it were. This does not mean hurriedly or in scramble fashion. It means neatly, in order, and with finality.

When on the stage members of the crowd must not be bumping into each other. Each (except when chorus work demands) should be made to feel that every individual has a personal piece of acting to perform; that he or she has as much relation, as an individual, to the action of the story, as any lead. When a story is being told, their manner must show interest, not only when they have to say their little piece, but all the time the action is on. Only too often have I seen a chorus or crowd in the market place leaning on each other's shoulders while murder is being committed, to be suddenly galvanized into life because "He has killed her" has to be said.

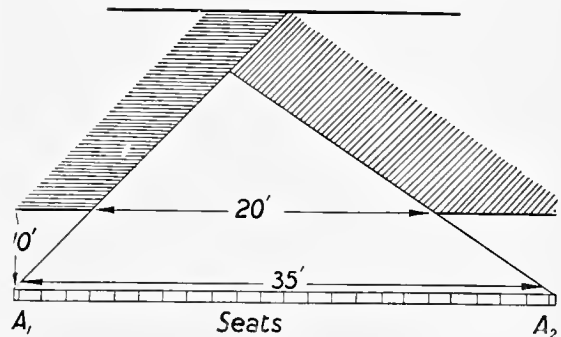
There would be all sorts of antecedent occasions that each individual can act, and a producer may have to build up little bits of business for each.

This sort of created business can have a sound technical purpose by leading the eyes of the audience, subconsciously, from one part of the stage to another. The eye will always be attracted by movement, and a little time before an important action, say an entrance, or opening an envelope, etc., a little movement, running round the crowd, will cause the eye of the audience to be where it ought to be at the tricky moment. This focusing can also be done by colour. Imagine a crowd in greys and other quiet colours, and one solo costume of geranium red among them. If that red costume starts to move up stage and come to rest, just as an entrance is made, that entrance will have more force behind it because all the eyes of the audience will have been drawn to the point of activity.

The movement of crowds in relation to the action of the play can be controlled by reference to the ground plan of the stage. The awkward angles right and left, marked by the proscenium sides represented by the shaded parts in the diagram can be used as watersheds for the supers when their presence as a crowd is necessary, but vital action must be seen in the clear space in the centre, that is, something is happening that *everybody* must see if their comprehension of the author's intention is to be quite clear.

I mentioned above that a certain solo circumstance, i.e. a murder, would have certain antecedent events and that the crowd or chorus could build up atmosphere by personal business created to fit in the scene. I suggested that the producer could build up this business. But I might add that it is better for it to be created by the chorus members and controlled by the producer. The zeal of the crowd members must not outrun the balance of the play, but it is important that the crowd should be not just a mass, but definitely a crowd of *individuals*. It follows that, human nature being what it is, each reaction to the circumstances will be personal. One will shriek, another faint, another, bolder than the rest, will dash forward to prevent the crime, others will help the victim, others call the police, while, if the villain is exceedingly ferocious and Sicilian, no doubt others will make themselves scarce.

But certainly everybody will do something, each according to his kind, and it is this personal something that the usual chorus member fails or omits to provide, and piles the whole work of evolving business on to the producer whose mind is sufficiently harassed with details of the principal event. It is no good waiting for the big part before attempting to act. The lethargy of many choruses is due to a frame of mind that will not



regard the little job in hand as big enough to do well. "Only a bit of chorus work," and so they stand listless and apathetic on the stage as lifeless and not half so useful as the painted scenery that forms the background.

It is not possible, in the confines of the space of this article, to lay down definite instructions because, as I have said elsewhere, there is no rule that can be applied at all times and to all circumstances, but there are certain principles that ought to be used as a touchstone or test whenever a problem arises. In this case the principle is just one of the similitude of reality. Each member of a cast, and particularly the crowd, should ask himself or herself privately "Given the circumstances of the instance concerned, how would I behave?" On that basis of considered conduct there is something to start with, and personal and private development of the idea will bring to the producer a finished piece of acting, something ready to be incorporated into the general plan, something that has saved the producer's time and temper, and something on which the budding star can sharpen his histrionic teeth, with the incentive of knowing that the ultimate result is his own creation. This contribution, personal and complete, is sure to catch the producer's eye, and at once he knows he has a worker, one who thinks

and builds. Consequently the trier is put on the solo list for a small part, and in due course he gets his chance, having graduated by individual work from the crowd, through small parts, to the lead, but with this great advantage—a sort of tradition of work that is all his own. He has been *acting*, *acting* all the time, so that when the big part does come his way he has a technique to employ. He is a craftsman, if not yet an acknowledged artist. He is credited with capacity and he has a record of created parts. Producers and selection committee nominate him with confidence and in two or three seasons he is among the recognized players.

Now, on the other hand, what of the diffident, the shy, the humble, who fear to thrust their own learners' notions under the nose of the Producer Great Panjandrum? There they are diffident, shy, etc., willing, eager, and waiting to be told. So eager. So willing. What of them? I can only say that they also serve who only stand and wait, and waiting is as far as they will get. For this diffidence, shyness, and modesty is no good to such an expressive art as the art of the theatre. It demands projection to the *n*th degree, and if the demand for projection cannot overcome the shyness and other desirable attributes of a drawing-room then artistic success will never come the way of this lovely flower born to blush unseen.

Now I do not want to convey the idea that at the next rehearsal of the crowd the producer should be faced with a chorus of twisting bodies, violently gesticulating hands, and faces screwing and twisting violently into all kinds of distorted expressions. There is reason in all things. Extreme action is not desired, but a certain amount of action; and my point is that if one wishes to succeed in stage work one must be positive in mentality, and above all, positive all the time, and particularly so in the beginning. Stage work is hard work, and it is no good the amateur thinking of it as a nice hobby for the long winter evenings. The amateur stage has passed that stage, and there are now large towns that can put up a company as good as a scratch group of professionals; but they have undoubtedly worked for their competence.

The curse of the amateur is vanity and complacency. Acting looks so easy, and with talent as fuel, it is easy. But it is not easy to be excellent, and I am here pleading that natural talent should be cultivated, trained, and developed by conscious practice. This means thought, sacrifice of leisure, concentration, and many other forms of discipline not acceptable to modern thought. But Art will not be denied and the neophyte must sacrifice if success is to come. It is a simple choice, but choice it is.

## THE SAXONS

By NEVIL TRUMAN

*Secretary, Nottingham Playgoers Club*

THE Saxons existed from about A.D. 460 to A.D. 1066 for my purpose, and one immediately conjures up visions of the Bayeux Tapestry. Yet the Saxons and Normans were by no means as awkward as they look in that piece of needlework, and their reputation for angularity must be laid at the door of Queen Matilda and her ladies who made this embroidery. The Saxons were perpetually harried by invaders—Danes, Scots, Northmen, Normans—and it is a wonder they had time to devote to the niceties of dress at all.

Clothes were made from silk, linen, and wool, often fur lined and embroidered in gold. Colourings were simple, and tended to favour browns. Clothes were thick, and a somewhat stocky appearance was given to the figure owing to their volume. The shape of the body was not revealed as in later times.

### DRESS

The *Under Tunic* (men) was of knee length and made of linen. The *Outer Tunic* (men) was of knee length, but had long sleeves that were wrinkled up over the arm, which they exceeded in length. It was slit at the sides from the hips downwards, to allow freedom.

The *Kirtle* (women) was an inner tunic with the same long sleeves, whilst the *Gunna* (women) was an outer tunic like the men's but had short sleeves. Its skirt was tucked into a belt on the right side.

It will be noted that the men's long sleeves were alone visible, whilst the women's short sleeves on the outer tunic showed and the longer sleeves of the kirtle also appeared from the elbow downwards. Thus the women revealed two sleeves, whilst the men showed only one.

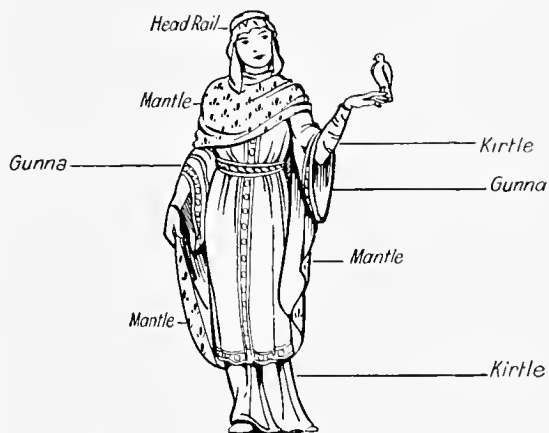
There was not much difference in the cut of the tunics of either sex, but the women's were slightly longer. A *Girdle* or *Belt* encircled the waist.

The *Mantle* (men) was cut something like a chasuble—elliptical or circular, and was fastened

on the right shoulder by a brooch or pin, or gathered through a ring. It was short and circular or long and straight.

### LEGS

*Trousers* (men) were long and loose, rather full, and wrinkled in much the same way as the sleeves, but on a lesser scale. They were cross gartered to



SAXON WOMAN

the knee and the trousers reached to mid thigh, from the foot. Cloth stockings were, alternatively, worn.

### FEET

*Shoes* (men) were low leather ones, with a fastening at the side or in front. Socks or stockings of cloth were worn.

*Shoes* (women) were tied or buckled at the ankles.

### HAIR

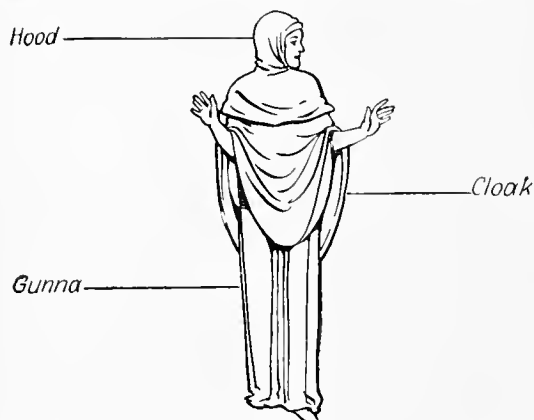
*Hair* (men) included a full beard with two-forked ends. The hair was long and unconfined, parted from crown to forehead, and curled in ringlets. A big moustache capped the lot, and the whole presented a vivid contrast to the closely cropped Normans when they came over.

*Hair* (women) was loose or braided, whilst fillets of material were worn by the better classes, but often the hair was hidden under the headrail (head covering). It was also worn in two plaits hanging down on either side of the front of the body.

#### HATS

*Caps* (men) were made of skins or cloth and were small and pointed, not unlike a cap of liberty or a Greek cap.

The *Head Rail* (women), later to be called a *Wimple*, was a large white linen or coloured



SAXON PEASANT

square, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  by  $\frac{3}{4}$  yd. in size, which was drawn over the head from the left to the right shoulder, under the chin, and then around the back of the neck to the right shoulder. Over this was worn a circlet of gold, which was narrow. The same thing for an unmarried girl was called a *Snood*. It completely hid all hair from view, save where the long hanging plaits were worn.

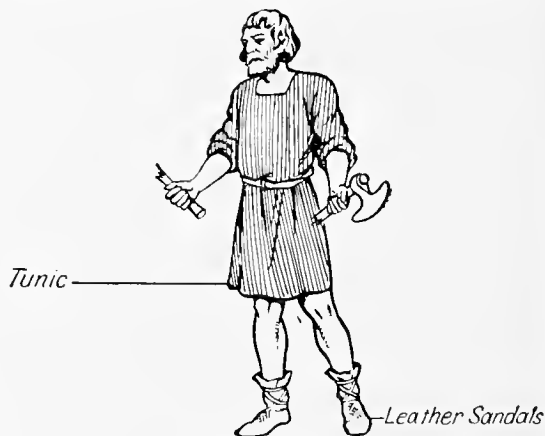
#### JEWELS

Besides the golden circlet mentioned, the women wore large circular ear-rings, necklaces, rings, bracelets of the precious metals, and they were skilful embroideresses, working in threads, which harmonized with the coloured material of the kirtle or tunica, and it was the purpose of showing this embroidery and colour to their best advantage that led to the custom of tucking up a corner of the gunna into the belt. The furs worn included sable, beaver, cat, fox, and lamb.

#### ARMOUR

The men's armour was composed of mail in chains, rings, or scales sewn sometimes on to leather, at others hung over a leather jerkin. The shield had a six inch boss projecting from its centre, and was kite shaped as in the Bayeux Tapestry, or circular in the more old fashioned North.

Sir Walter Scott was a careful writer, and he has a brilliant passage descriptive of the costume of this period. The Anglo-Saxon aristocrat had "long yellow hair, equally divided on the top of



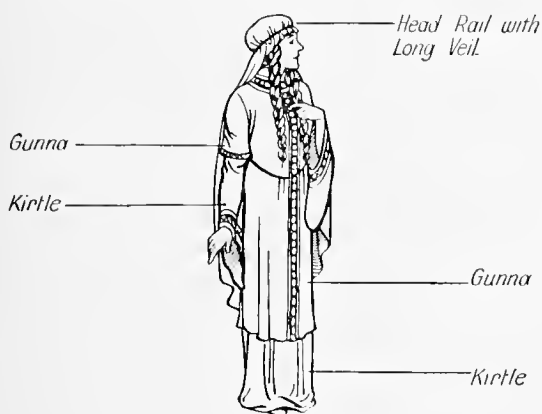
SAXON PEASANT

his head and upon his brow, and combed down on each side to the length of his shoulders. His dress was a tunic of forest green, trimmed at the throat and cuffs with what was called minever, a kind of fur, inferior to ermine, and formed, it is believed, of the skins of the grey squirrel. This doublet hung unbuttoned over a close dress of scarlet, which was set tight to his body; he had breeches of the same, but they did not reach below the lower part of his thigh, leaving the knee exposed. His feet had sandals of the same fashion as the peasants, but of finer materials and secured in the front with gold clasps. He had bracelets of gold upon his arms, and a broad collar of the same precious metal about his neck . . . Behind his seat was hung a scarlet cloth cloak, lined with fur, and a cap of the same material richly embroidered, which completed the dress of the opulent landowner when he chose to go forth."

From the word "Gunna" comes our modern "Gown." Sir Walter Scott has an equally interesting passage about the Anglo-Saxon noblewoman.

"Her locks," he says, "were braided with gems, and being worn at full length intimated the noble and free born condition of the maiden." (Here I think Scott describes the hair of the younger women only, for, as I have written above, women's hair was nearly always carefully concealed under the head-rail.) "A golden chain, to which was attached a small reliquary, hung round her neck.

"She wore a bracelet on her arms, which



SAXON LADY

modern love for the antique and the respect for the work of our ancestors in Britain.

The moustaches of the men were grown as long as Nature allowed, and it was the absence of this feature that led King Harold's spies to assume that the clean shaven army of William the Conqueror were not soldiers but merely Monks. The Conqueror took a dislike to these over prolific hirsute adornments, and ordered the Saxons (or at any rate those about him) to be clean shaven.

#### PEASANTS

The Saxon peasant wore clothes of the simplest cut possible, in view of the fact that his wife had to



SAXON NOBLE

were bare. Her dress was an under gown and kirtle of pale sea green silk, over which hung a loose robe, which reached to the ground, having very wide sleeves, which came down, however, very little below the elbow. This robe was crimson, and manufactured out of the finest wool. A veil of silk, interwoven with gold, was attached to the upper part of it, which could be, at the wearer's pleasure, either drawn over the face or bosom, after the Spanish fashion, or disposed as a sort of drapery round the shoulders."

Considering that Sir Walter Scott wrote over a century ago, when antiquarian questions received scant attention (apart from Classical ruins) it is surprising how accurate his description of Saxon costume is, and *Ivanhoe* throws quite a vivid light on the manners and customs of this period. Scott was, of course, the pioneer of the

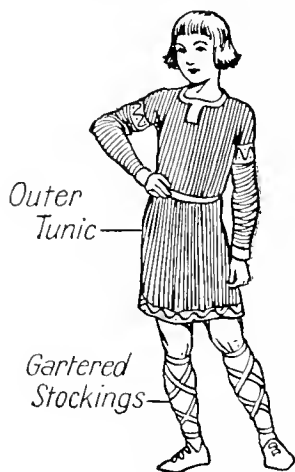
make them in her spare time. A sleeved close jacket of skin reached from the throat to the knees, with a narrow neck opening just sufficient to admit the passage of the head without leaving too wide a gap to admit cold and wet. His sandals were bound with leathern thongs and a roll of leather was twisted round the legs to the calf, leaving the knees bare. This bandaging and cross gartering of the legs, over stocking or trousers, is a distinctive feature of Saxon times.

#### GENERAL

The practice of making sleeves much too long and wrinkling them up was a practical one, for it gave additional warmth through the extra thickness, and in winter the hands could be withdrawn completely into the sleeve, which thus served the purpose of the modern glove.

The edges of the tunics can be embroidered in coloured thread or wool to form a border of decoration; and this border can be carried up around the slits that appeared at each side from the hip downward (for the men) to allow of freedom of movement, the tunic being rather closely fitting.

The Bayeux Tapestry is a good guide to the dresses, but some elementary knowledge of the



SAXON YOUTH

clothes that were worn is necessary in order to distinguish the various garments from each other. Unfortunately, the Bayeux Tapestry is not easy to reproduce in illustration. The best illustrations of it are the enlarged coloured prints that may be seen in many museums in London and the country. The small photos of the Tapestry sold at the Victoria and Albert Museum will not serve the purpose of anyone making costumes in this style.

#### MEN

##### *Dress*

Under tunic.

Outer tunic with long sleeves, slit at sides.

Girdle.

Mantle, circular or straight, fastened on shoulder.

##### *Legs*

Trousers, long and loose and wrinkled.

Cross garterings.

##### *Feet*

Low leather shoes.

Socks or stockings.

##### *Hair*

Full bi-forked beard. Heavy moustache. Long, curled hair, mid parted.

##### *Hats*

Skin or cloth "Liberty" caps.

##### *Armour*

Mail of various types. Kite-shaped or circular shield with large centre boss.

#### WOMEN

##### *Dress*

Kirtle—an inner tunic with long sleeves.

Gunna—an outer tunic with short sleeves.

Skirt tucked into belt.

Girdle.

##### *Feet*

Shoes tied or buckled at ankles.

##### *Hair*

Loose or braided for youth and peasants.

Head-rail for the others, concealing hair.

Fillets of material.

##### *Hats*

Head-rail.

Circlets, mainly golden.

##### *Jewels*

Large round earrings, bracelets, rings, necklaces.

#### PEASANTS

##### *Dress*

Sleeved close tunic. Narrow neck opening.

##### *Feet*

Leather sandals, thonged.

##### *Legs*

Leather bandages, or cross gartering.



# A "STRAIGHT" MAKE-UP FOR MEN

By ALFRED HARTOP

*Perruquier and Lecturer to Amateur Societies*

"With this special observance, that you  
o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for  
anything so overdone is from the purpose  
of playing, whose end is to hold, as 'twere,  
the mirror up to nature; to show virtue  
her own feature, scorn her own image, and  
the very age and body of the time his form."

HAMLET

PRACTICALLY the same methods are used in applying a "straight" make-up for men as those described for women. If the directions already given have been followed it will be clearly understood that the term "straight" implies the reproducing of natural characteristics, or one's conventional appearance, without any attempt to give the illusion of altered features.

Assuming that the materials previously prescribed for men are at hand, we will briefly consider a few points that are essentially masculine. When ready for making up it is advisable to wear a dressing gown, of washable material, as there is no doubt that the covering provided by one not only protects the clothing from spots of paint and powder, but, also, prevents the possibility of a chill when the actor is only half dressed in a draughty dressing room.

There should be little need to mention, except as a reminder, that the face should be newly shaved—the reason is obvious: grease paint will not cover a stubble beard. The entire surface to be made up will require an application of cold cream, or cocoa-butter, well rubbed into the skin to fill the pores. This done, wipe off all surplus cream with a towel, leaving the skin almost dry.

For the foundation flesh colour No. 3½ will give a healthy, slightly suntanned appearance. Apply by making a few streaks across the lower part of the forehead, down either cheek, over the nose, round the chin, and about the neck. Remember the idea of wearing only one side of the stick so as to produce a wedge-like point, which has the advantage of a larger covering surface, the

stick is less liable to break, and the point edge is useful for lining purposes (Fig. 9A).

With the fingers stroke out the paint until a smooth, even, covering is produced. From the lower part of the forehead stroke upward, allowing the colour to fade out at the hair line to avoid a ridge of paint at that point. Cover the eyelids and sockets, giving special attention to the lower lids, for it is a common fault to miss these parts and to produce white patches that destroy the natural appearance of the eyes. Smooth out from the cheeks over the ears, behind the ears down to the neck, and well below the line of the collar from the chin. Use judgment as to the amount necessary to cover the skin thoroughly without being dauby.

The fuller colour of the cheeks is obtained by applying a few touches of No. 9, or if required still darker, No. 9 with a little Carmine 3 added. Place with the finger tips about the cheek bones and spread up towards the temples, backwards to the ears, well up over the lower eyelids, avoiding any noticeable edge where this colour fades out into the foundation. Continuing with the same colour, run a shading under the ridge of the eyebrows and well into the eye corner, taking care to avoid getting any on to the eyelids, as placed there it would give an aged appearance to the eye. Healthy ears are usually of as full a colour as the cheeks; therefore place some over the edges, carrying it down to the tips, or lobes, of the ears. The indentation in the centre of the upper lip may be defined by a shadow of the same colour. In a general way keep the use of this full colour within the limits of a normally healthy appearance.

Observe at this point that the colours applied resemble a typical juvenile complexion, and lack the details that characterize mature manhood. Here, consideration must be given to individual requirements. If a juvenile, or it is necessary to appear as one, no addition to the foundation is required. Should you, however, have reached an age when shaving is a necessary part of your grooming and your face carries the obvious sign

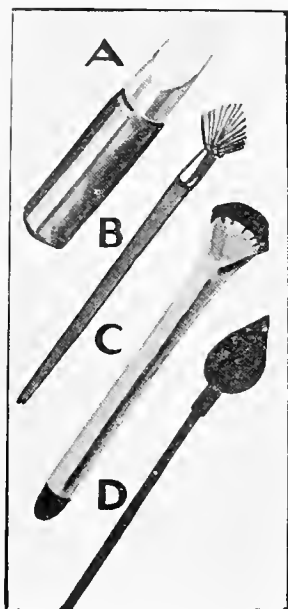


FIG. 9  
AIDS TO LINING

of a darkened skin in the shaving area, then it is in the interests of a correct appearance to reproduce the shaven effect. To do this blend a small amount of grey liner into the foundation, keeping it strictly confined to the necessary area; that is to say, precisely where your beard and moustache would grow. The foundation completed, attention is next given to the needs of the eyes. Here, again, individual requirements should be considered to find the extent to which paint may be

used about the eyes without appearing effeminate.

For the juvenile, or where the "part" indicates an uncommonly handsome and debonaire impression, a soft blue shading on the eyelids and a fairly distinct outlining of the eyes may be employed to advantage; though in more ordinary instances a grey or brown shading is to be recommended—grey for fair types, brown for medium or dark types.

Select the colour—say grey—and place a line on the upper eyelids, immediately above the lashes; smooth upward and fade out at the top fold, then extend outward carrying the colour a trifle beyond the outer corners of the eyes. This, in effect, slightly lengthens the eyelids. Reference to Fig. 8A will clear up any doubt about the correct extent of the shading.

The outline of the eyes is emphasized with the dark brown liner. The eyelashes are strengthened by drawing a line along the edges of the upper lids. This is carried out a little at the outer corners to imitate a continuation of the lashes. Fig. 8c shows that this line is exactly under the extensions of the eyelid colour, starting fairly emphatically and diminishing to a mere suggestion. A further line is drawn under each eye to imitate the lower lashes. Starting at a point about a quarter of the width of the eye from the inner corner, draw a straight line along the edge of the lower lid until it reaches a point under where the eyelids meet, and then incline up towards the centre of the line coming down from the upper lid. A tiny dot of carmine is placed at the inner corner of the eyes to lend lustre to them.

The lips should be given a light shading of Carmine 3, the upper one being toned rather darker than the lower. It is usually sufficient to paint the upper lip only, following its natural shape, then to transfer a little to the lower one by pressing the lips firmly together and moving the jaw from side to side so as to rub the lips together. If you feel that it is really necessary to improve the appearance of the mouth by reducing or enlarging it, here is the stage to do it—before powdering. To reduce, use the wedge point of the foundation stick of paint to run along the edge of either lip, or both, thus cutting off the thickness and forming a good shape inside the natural outline. To enlarge, carry the carmine a little beyond the ordinary outline of the upper lip, then pause to see if that is sufficient; it probably will be. Only in extreme cases will it be found necessary to enlarge both lips.

The face is next powdered, either with "Blending Powder" or Violet Powder. The Violet Powder can be used direct or tinted with a Natural shade for juveniles; for older men an addition of Rachel or Sun Tan shade will kill whiteness and produce a creamy tint that will soften the foundation to perfection. Apply with the wool puff, conveying a thin coating round the jaws, first patting it on, then repeating applications until all the painted surface is completely covered up. Observe that the powder dries and fixes the make-up by absorbing the grease; so, in order to assist the process of absorption and ensure the best degree of permanency, powder should be allowed

to remain a few minutes before any attempt is made to brush off the surplus. Remove superfluous powder by brushing lightly with a baby brush or the puff, paying special attention to corners that may retain the powder and show as pale patches when on the stage. Many men display an amusing lack of aptitude in wielding a powder puff, but if the eyes are powdered carefully, and as soon as possible, to avoid smearing the rest should be comparatively easy. Do not attempt to apply too much at once, and employ a light patting motion without any suggestion of rubbing that may disturb the paint.

Powder should be removed from the eyelashes and eyebrows, which if sufficiently thick or dark in colour may not require any treatment. Should they, however, require emphasizing it can be done with the brown cosmetic applied with a small stiff brush. If the hair is closely cropped at the temples and around the ears cosmetic should be applied in just sufficient quantity to simulate the hair line, otherwise, the stage lighting will cause these parts to look perfectly bald. In the event of this being the case be sure that the foundation paint has been carried into this area to kill any paleness of the scalp, then apply the cosmetic lightly with a tooth brush, painting the hair but not the skin beneath. The make-up is now complete.

#### REMOVAL OF MAKE-UP

Make-up can be removed much more simply than it is applied, yet, to do it thoroughly, without discomforting after effects, a sound method must be employed.

Smear a dab of cold cream or the special variety of "removing cream" over the cheeks and forehead, working it into the paint so as to loosen it, and wipe off with paper tissues or soft cloth. To avoid the bulk of grease and paint entering the eyes leave them until other parts of the face, the neck, and roots of the hair have been thoroughly cleaned by a repetition of cream and wiping. Now, use a clean smear of cream to the eyes, taking care to avoid rubbing it into them. If the paint on the eyelashes is rather obstinate, take hold of them with the cloth between the forefinger and thumb and pull the paint from them. When every trace of paint has been removed the face

will still retain a residue of grease, which can, however, be cleared by the use of a sponge, or pad of cotton-wool, dipped in astringent lotion. A good lotion can be cheaply made by mixing one part Witch Hazel and one part Lavender Water or Rose Water. This will kill the grease, close the pores, and leave the face scrupulously clean. The alternative to the use of the lotion is simply to give the face a light powdering to absorb the grease, and to wash with soap and hot water when you arrive home.

The drawing of fine lines with grease paint colours may be easily accomplished by any of the following methods. A camel hair brush may be dipped in colour that has first been melted, then pressed to a flat edge with the finger and thumb (Fig. 9B). The flat end of an orange-wood stick smeared with colour will answer for very short lines but should be carefully handled when working about the eyes to avoid injury. The utility of a liner can be improved by pressing flat the covering paper at one end, squeezing up more paint to the edge as required (Fig. 9C). Probably the best way for all lining purposes is to cut off a bare half inch from the liner, remove the surrounding paper, and press the piece of paint on to the flat end of a long orange-wood stick. When firmly adhered to the stick the paint can be pressed between the finger and thumb to any desired shape of point, preferably a flat tapering one, as shown in Fig. 9D. This point or edge can instantly be renewed as often as worn down. Sticks of brown, blue, lake, and grey, should be prepared in this way.

#### BLENDING OF COMPOUND FOUNDATIONS

Assuming that the simple "straight" make-up has been practised and mastered, the scope of our subject may now be extended by a consideration of blending. By this term is meant the discriminate mixing of two or more colours to produce a different one, the product being a compound shade, intended to meet a particular need. For example, it will be found that by mixing together Nos. 5 and 9 a tone can be produced that will exactly match No. 3½. Approximately the same tone is derived from a mixture of Nos. 2½, Chrome, and No. 9. There are other useful mixtures or blends.

Nos. $1\frac{1}{2}$ and $2\frac{1}{2}$	equal No. 2
" $1\frac{1}{2}$ , 5, and 9	" " $2\frac{1}{2}$ special
" $2\frac{1}{2}$ and Carmine 2	" " 3
" 8 and Chrome	" " 14
" 9 and Chrome	" " 4
" 8 and 5	" " $4\frac{1}{2}$
" 9, Chrome, and No. 8	" " 13
" 8, Chrome, and Carmine 3	" " 15

Consequently, it will be realized that from the limited number of colours in your possession a large variety of foundation flesh tints may be blended that will provide the rosy tint of youth, the ruddy or florid colour of middle age, the sallowness of old age, and practically all racial colourings.

A critical observation of the average natural complexion will reveal that the colour is not an even distribution of a flat shade, but that it is composed of two shades, one over the other; that is to say, a reddish shade superimposed over a background of a pale creamy shade. The aim of make-up being to reproduce a life-likeness as "holding the mirror up to Nature," is it not obvious that a two-colour foundation will give more natural results than a single one?

We have seen that a blend of Nos. 5 and 9 gives the same shade as No.  $3\frac{1}{2}$ ; therefore, it is preferable, in place of using  $3\frac{1}{2}$  as a foundation, to use Nos. 5 and 9 in combination, a further advantage being that the result may be varied according to the proportion of light and dark. Undoubtedly, the combined use of these two shades is the medium of a useful range of foundation shades; in fact, judging by its popularity among the "old hands," it would appear to be the panacea for all make-up troubles. It is, however, possible to overrate its importance at the expense of other blends that may be more suitable under certain conditions, as, say, a blend of Nos. 5 and 8, which is equally productive of useful colourings, especially for men of dark type.

The next step in "straight" make-up should be along the lines of a blended foundation, then its advantages will be better appreciated. The

first of these is the natural animation that it imparts. Further, the practice in blending will develop a knowledge of colour value and selection, which is essential in "character" make-up. The application of the separate colours is best carried out by first covering the face with the pale shade and then adding the dark shade in such a way as to imitate the flecked appearance of a natural complexion.

Men will start by first applying No. 5 direct from the stick, so that every part of the area to be made up is covered, thinly but evenly. Do not get the idea that because two colours are used double the amount of paint is applied. Only use sufficient to form a pale, clean tone of groundwork, then follow with No. 9 from the stick to the finger tips, and thence to the face. Make no attempt definitely to mix the two shades on the face, but rather get the feeling that the redder shade remains on the surface, thus allowing the paler undercoat to reflect through. The whole area of groundwork should be "topped" by repeated deft touches until just the right tone is arrived at, though varied to result in a semblance of natural light and shade. After a few trials the scope of variation offered by shades combined in this way will be fully realized.

When the compound foundation is complete, the make-up proceeds on exactly the same lines as previously described; the cheeks are coloured, shadows are put in, eye colour is added, etc. If the whole application is carried out in the manner described the result should be a dry, smooth, finish of lasting qualities, comparable in effect to the make-up shown in Fig. 10. With practice you will find that this work is all far more simple in execution than it sounds. Make the sequence of features a habit. This will simplify operations and save time. Fifteen minutes is about the time that you will require to allow at your dressing table to put on this really efficient make-up—one that will give you confidence in its correctness to face any audience.

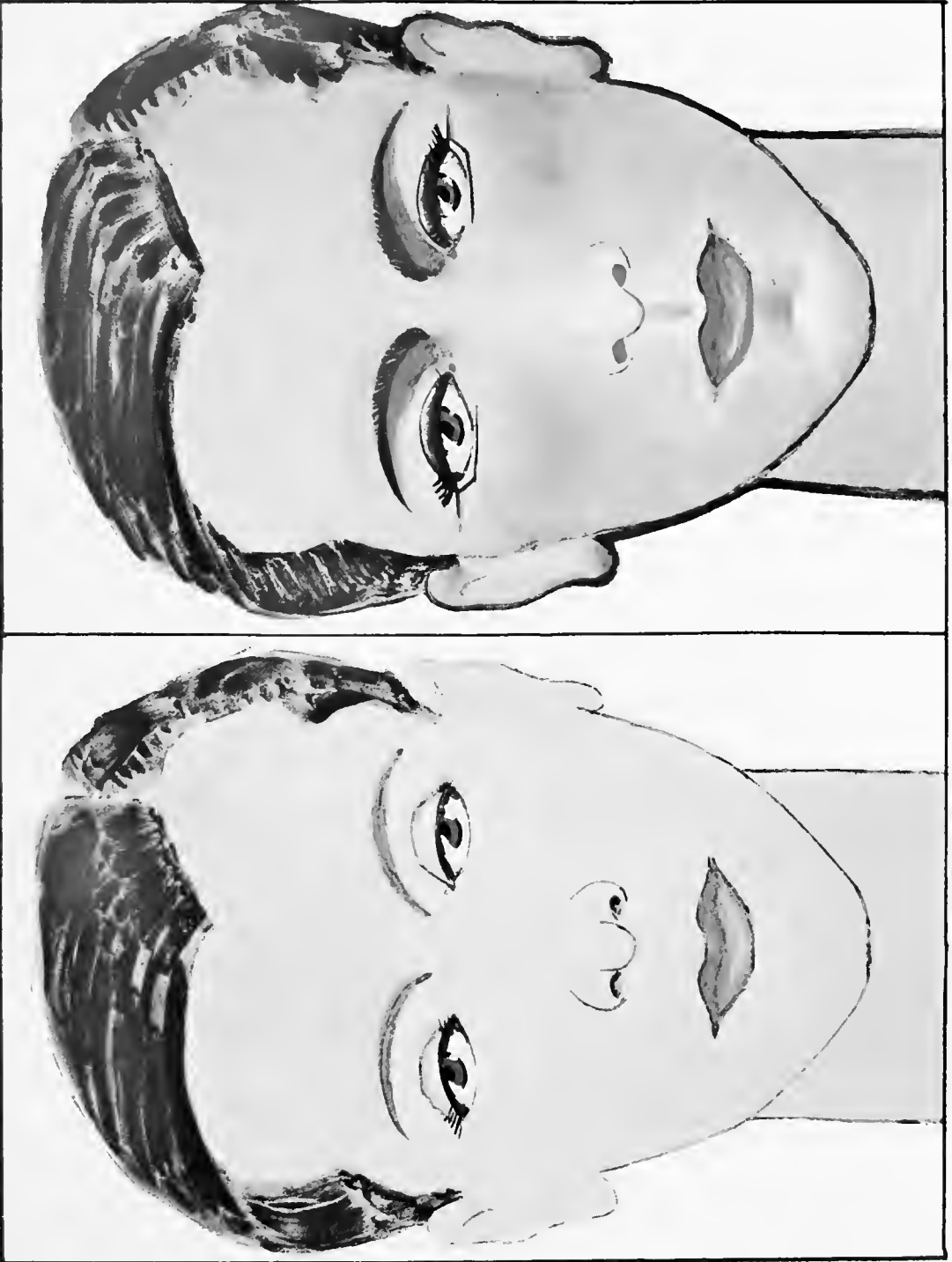


Fig. 1



## THE MEASUREMENT AND SOURCES OF LIGHT

By C. HAROLD RIDGE, A.R.S.M., D.I.C., and F. S. ALDRED, A.M.Inst.C.E.  
*Consulting Engineers*

**M**EASUREMENT of light is known as Photometry, and is the comparison of the relative intensity or brightness of two sources of light. By comparing the illumination of a test surface by a standard light source of known value, with the illumination made by the lamp under test, and adjusting until equal illumination is produced, the value of the latter is obtained. The instrument used is a Photometer, its operation depending on the Law of Inverse Squares, which states that the intensity of illumination produced on a surface by a source of light varies inversely, as the square of the distance between the surface and the source of light, or—

$$\text{Intensity of illumination} = \frac{\text{intensity of source}}{(\text{distance})^2}$$

If a piece of paper with a grease spot on it is illuminated on one side, the grease spot, being more translucent, will appear brighter than the rest of the paper to an observer on the other side. Conversely, if the observer is on the same side as the lamp, the grease spot will appear darker than the rest, because it lets more light pass through, and reflects less. If, therefore, the two sources of light to be compared (*A* and *B*) are placed one on each side of the paper, by moving one light nearer to, or away from, the paper, a position will be obtained when the grease spot will appear neither lighter nor darker than the rest of the paper, from which it follows that the light from the two sources is of equal intensity. Let light *A* be our standard and its intensity *AI*, *B* the lamp under test of intensity *BI*, *RA* and *RB* their distances from the paper respectively; then by the Law of Inverse Squares we have—

$$\frac{AI}{RA^2} = \frac{BI}{RB^2}$$

$$\text{Therefore } BI = \frac{AI \times RB^2}{RA^2}$$

The important point to remember is, that if we double the distance between a light and a screen,

we do not halve the light on the screen, but reduce it to a quarter of its previous value.

### UNITS OF LIGHT

The British unit of *intensity* of a source of light is the International Candle, the standard being a pentane lamp, which is, under certain specified conditions, about 10 candle power (10 c.p.). The German unit is the Hefner, being equal to 0.9 International Candle. The French Unit Candle, called the Bougie Decimale, is equal to the International Candle.

Although the standard candle is the fundamental unit on which light measurements are based, to speak of an electric lamp of so many candle-powers is apt to be misleading, as the c.p. is rarely the same in all directions. However, the light intensities from a source emitted at various angles, about either the horizontal or vertical axis, can be obtained and plotted graphically, producing a figure known as a Light Distribution, or Polar Curve.

The average of the candle power values in all directions is known as the Mean Spherical Candle Power (M.S.C.P.), which may be defined as the candle power of a source of equal intensity in every direction, radiating the same total amount of light as the actual source.

The radiant energy from a source of light, referred to as flux, is measured in lumens, a lumen being the unit of flux of light. In simple language, one lumen is the amount of light falling on a surface of one square foot in area, each point of the surface being one foot away from a light source of one candle power.

It will help the reader to understand this definition, if he imagines the light source at the centre of a sphere of one foot radius.

The total radiation of light in lumens is equal to the M.S.C.P. multiplied by  $4\pi$ , or 12.57.

It can now be seen that the most satisfactory basis on which to rate a lamp is either in lumens or M.S.C.P., as both are a measure of the total

light emitted, and for stating the efficiency of a lamp the number of lumens per watt is a definite basis and applicable to all lamps.

It is interesting to observe that, in both vacuum and gas-filled lamps, the lumen output in each wattage decreases as the lamp voltage rises, also that the variation is not so great in the case of the former as in the latter type of lamps.

The following figures, taken from the list of a well-known make of lamps, give the amount of variation—

Lamp Wattage	Type	Voltage Range	Approximate Total Lumens	Lumens per Watt
40	Vacuum	100/130	372	9.3
	"	200/260	348	8.7
	Gas-filled	100/130	424	10.6
	"	200/260	316	7.9
1000	"	100/130	18,700	18.7
	"	200/260	16,900	16.9
1500	"	100/130	29,400	19.6
	"	200/260	27,000	18.0

The column headed "Lumens per Watt" shows that the efficiency is higher in the 100 volt than in the 200 volt lamps of same wattage, and emphasizes the considerable increase in efficiency in the lamps of larger size.

#### THE UNIT OF ILLUMINATION

Illumination should not be confused with the luminous radiation emitted from a source of light, which, as we have already seen, is measured in lumens. The term illumination is generally used to indicate the intensity of illumination falling on a surface, and is measured in foot-candles, the foot-candle being the Unit of Illumination, and is defined as that illumination produced on a surface, normal to the direction of the light flux, from a source of 1 c.p. at a distance of 1 foot.

From the definition of a lumen, it will be seen that the amount of light required to produce 1 foot candle on a surface of 1 sq. ft. is 1 lumen.

Although it has been thought advisable to consider the preceding elementary principles of light, hoping that the reader who has not studied the subject hitherto will be helped thereby, the light-

ing of a stage setting is not usually carried out upon a consciously scientific basis. The scientific aspect underlies the apparatus used, and the effects obtained from it, but the manipulation and placing of the lighting gear is more a matter of experience giving the necessary knowledge, so that instead of working in lumens and foot-candles, etc., the theatre electrician will calculate the lighting required in wattages, in the case of back cloth lighting as so many watts per square foot to be illuminated, and in floods and spots according to what they have to do.

Owing to the varying conditions, colours of scenery, properties, costumes, etc., it would be difficult to work otherwise, and it must be remembered that whereas Illuminating Engineering may approach a science, Stage Lighting, as apart from mere stage illumination, is an Art, and its few formulæ, therefore, are empirical. In practice, experience of the general requirements of different sizes and designs of stages enables the engineer to provide apparatus capable of meeting the needs of the producer, allowing for the differences of method, and for what is more important, the use of colours.

#### SOURCES OF LIGHT

*Lime-light.* This is an intensely bright white light, produced by heating a small block of lime to incandescence by means of a gas flame of oxygen and some other gas, such as coal gas, hydrogen, or acetylene. These gases are contained in steel cylinders, which, with their pipes and other gear, form a bulky apparatus. It has been superseded by the electric arc-lamp and gas-filled lamp, but it is still very useful in the provinces where neither gas nor electricity is available. In such cases, it may be used with good effect from the auditorium in the magic lantern (preferably from the gallery). The term still remains in the vocabulary of the theatre, although the lime-light itself is never used; thus, producers will frequently ask for the "limes" when they mean front-of-house arc lanterns.

*Vacuum Lamps.* These are the ordinary metallic filament lamps, the globe being exhausted of air. It is not possible to run the filament at so high a temperature as the gas-filled lamp, and consequently the light is more orange in colour. Where the lights are visible to the eye, this is an



advantage. The lamps are cheaper than the gas-filled, but take more current for the same amount of light. This type of lamp will not bear rough usage, so it is a source of expense in the theatre, where it has often been used for battens and footlights. Now that gas-filled lamps can be bought in low wattages, there is no point in using vacuum lamps, even in small theatres.

*Gas-filled Lamps.* These have metallic filaments capable of being heated to a higher temperature than those of the ordinary vacuum type

upwards are fitted with screw caps, and need a special goliath screw holder. The intermediate size of 200 watts is usually fitted with a screw cap, which needs an Edison screw holder (similar to the goliath, but smaller). To prevent complication, and to allow of the interchange of lamps as far as possible, it is recommended that this medium-sized lamp and screw holder be avoided on the stage.

The ordinary gas-filled lamps are used on the stage for floodlights, battens, and footlights, as in

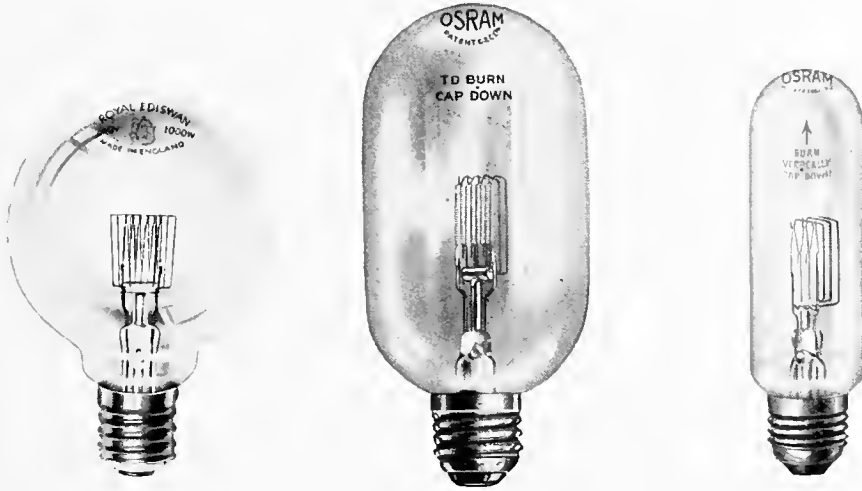


FIG. 15

The Strand Electric Co., Ltd.

lamps, owing to the fact that the glass bulb is filled with a gas, such as nitrogen, or argon, at about atmospheric pressure, which enables the filament to be run at about  $2,630^{\circ}\text{C}$ . without undue disintegration. For this reason the light is nearly white and approximates to daylight. They give more light for the same current consumption than the vacuum lamps, the net increase in efficiency being considerable in the larger sizes, but their initial cost is rather higher. They are made for all the common voltages and in sizes ranging from 40 watts to 3,000 watts. The heat generated in the lamp is considerable, and any lantern constructed to contain it must be of sufficient size and well ventilated. These lamps are moderately strong, and stand handling better than the vacuum lamps mentioned above. They can be obtained in sizes of 60 to 150 watts with the ordinary household bayonet caps, and also in the 200 watt size if *specially ordered*. The sizes from 300 watts

these pieces of apparatus the shape of the filament is of no great importance. Special lamps are made for use in apparatus in which a "bunched" filament is better, as in spot lanterns. In any "optical system" the filament should occupy as small a space as possible, and round and tubular bulb "projector" type gas-filled lamps are sold for ordinary voltages having bunched instead of the usual spread-out filaments. Still better from this point of view are the 30 volt lamps, taking 20 amp. in the 600 watt size, and 30 amp. in the 900 watt, in which the filament is very compact, and gives a high power concentrated light. These low voltage lamps are high in first cost, and have a shorter life than the higher voltage lamps, but their use is justified when used in positions where an arc lamp would otherwise be required. These lamps have been used in spot lanterns fixed in the front-of-house with remarkable results (see Fig. 15).

Among the special lamps we now have very high wattages, as high as 20 kilowatts, and fan-cooled lamps of this type have been used in the German theatres as rivals to the arc for long throws.

In using these special projector lamps, attention must be paid to the maker's instructions regarding correct burning positions, especially with

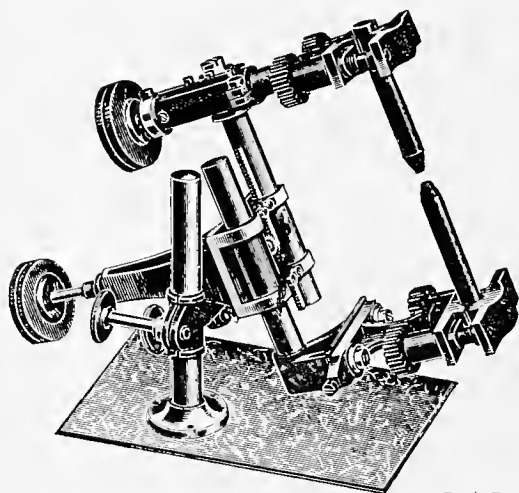


FIG. 16

Davis Bros.

the tubular bulb pattern. In the case of the round bulb "projector" lamps, however, the maker's warnings in this respect need not be taken too seriously. The Authors have burnt these lamps in all positions in spot lanterns quite successfully.

*Arc Lamps.* The study of the electric arc is very interesting, and theoretical consideration of its operation introduces many fascinating electrical phenomena, which in themselves have been the subject of many books. However, for the purposes of the present work a brief explanation of the principle under which it functions will be sufficient.

If two carbon rods are connected to an electrical supply, of, say, 50 or 60 volts, and the ends of the rods brought together, a current will flow along them, from the carbon connected to the positive lead, called the positive carbon, to the other, called the negative carbon, assuming the supply to be direct current. If we begin to separate the ends, heat is at once generated, which in-

creases as the movement continues, until the tips become incandescent. When the contact is ruptured, a spark bridges the gap, increasing the temperature sufficiently to cause volatilization of a small quantity of carbon into vapour, which acts like a conductor, and makes the circuit again complete, passing the current between the carbons. If the carbons are parted a distance of about half-an-inch, the arc becomes steady, and is the seat of the expenditure of a great amount of energy that is converted into heat, raising the temperature of the carbon tip to something like  $4,000^{\circ}\text{C.}$ , and maintaining the carbon vapour also in an incandescent state.

The tip of the positive carbon becomes a brilliant crater, from which most of the light comes, only about 5 per cent being derived from the arc itself, which is of a pale blue colour, and although not giving much visible light, emits a great deal of energy in actinic rays beyond the visible spectrum.

In essence, this is an arc lamp as used for stage purposes, the carbon rods being fixed in carriers, which also act as conductors of the current. Suitable hand mechanism operates the carriers, causing them to bring the carbons together, or part them to start or "strike" the arc, and the subsequent movements required to control or "feed" the arc (see Fig. 16).

Arcs will operate on both direct or alternating current, but for stage work the advantages of the D.C. arc compel its exclusive use, despite the expenditure incurred in conversion plant, when the main supply happens to be A.C.

Owing to the crater on the positive being the principal source of light, this carbon is held so that the crater faces the opening in the sheet-iron case through which the beams of light pass. The rate of consumption of the positive carbon being greater than on the negative, the former has a larger diameter in order to even the lineal rate of consumption of both carbons, and also to reduce the screening effect of the negative carbon on the crater. Positive carbons are made with a core of softer grade of carbon to centralize the crater, and negative carbons frequently have a thin copper deposit on the outside to decrease their resistance.

## RAIN—I

By A. E. PETERSON

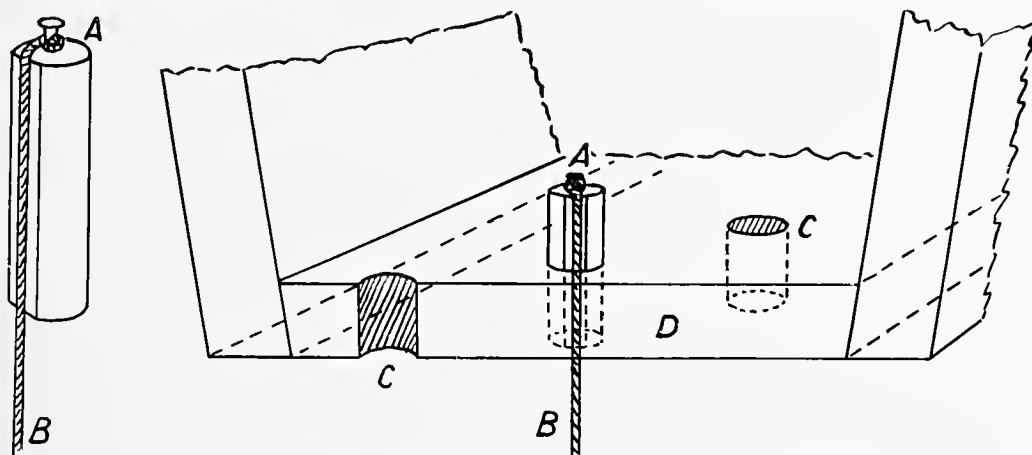
Founder, Sunday Night Adventurers; Secretary, Kingston Marionette Players, etc.

MANY plays depend upon the incidence of rain to develop plot or atmosphere.

In Shaw's *Pygmalion*, for instance, the stage directions to the first act read: "Covent Garden at 11.15 p.m. Torrents of heavy summer rain—cab whistles blowing frantically in all directions. Pedestrians running for shelter in the market and under the portico of St. Paul's Church,

there is a quiet, steady, warm, windless downpour of rain. As the town clock chimes the quarter, Judith comes in with a couple of candles in earthenware candlesticks and sets them on the table."

Schnitzler arranges a rain storm so that Anatol may meet Gabrielle, an old sweetheart, in *A Christmas Present*, and in the third act of Ronald



PEGS MADE FROM  $\frac{3}{8}$ " DOWELS WITH A FLAT PART PLANED LENGTHWAYS

Panel pin at top, A. Strong thread B tied to pin A and pressed into holes C, which are bored through bottom of delivery tank D. The thread is then allowed to drop into the receiving trough.

where there are already several people, among them a lady and her daughter in evening dress. They are all peering out gloomily at the rain, except one man with his back turned to the rest, who seems wholly preoccupied with a notebook in which he is busily writing. The church clock strikes the first quarter." In the second act of *The Devil's Disciple* Shaw finds it necessary to have a rain storm, so that later on in the play the exchange of a wet coat for a dry one enables Richard Dudgeon to change places with Minister Anderson, whom the military are anxious to arrest and to bring to trial as a rebel. In this case, "The evening has closed in and the room is dark except for the cosy firelight and the dim oil lamps seen through the window in the wet street, where

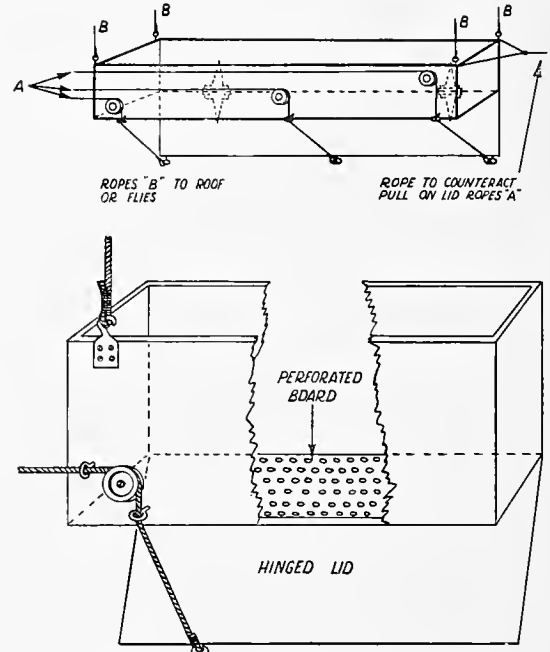
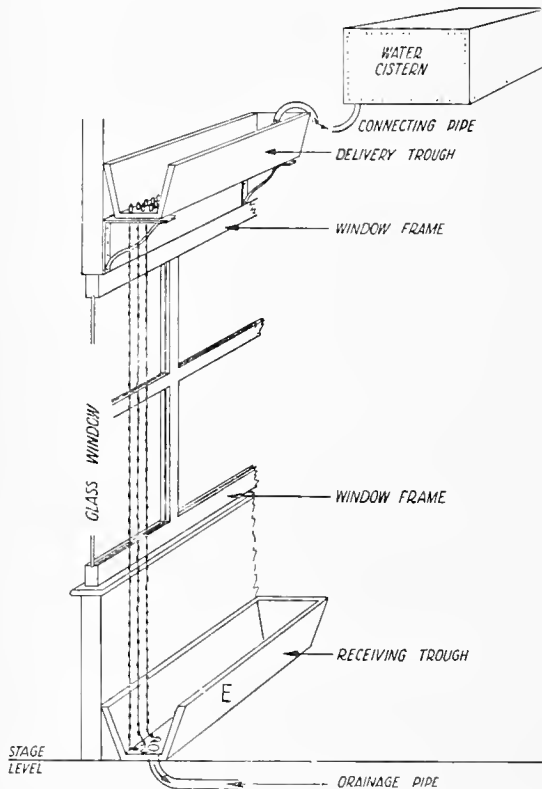
Mackenzie's *Musical Chairs*, "... it is early morning. The rain is falling torrentially." In another play the continuous drumming of tropical rain was heard from the moment the play began until the final curtain. There was no respite, even during the intervals, and the noise towards the end of the play became almost intolerable.

### VISIBLE RAIN

Unless it is absolutely imperative, the use of water to suggest rain is not recommended, but if there *must* be "real" rain there are many ways to arrange it. It may be supplied by having metal pipes, suitably perforated, fixed to battens and connected either to a water tank in the flies or to the water system, providing there is sufficient

pressure. If the rain has to be seen falling on to the stage, a waterproof stage cloth must be used, and underneath this a second such cloth should be laid. Between the two cloths there should be a layer of sawdust to absorb any water that may percolate through. Similarly, if water has to be seen gushing down a window, the same means

trough of the same shape, but larger, was placed immediately underneath it at stage level. In the construction of the troughs the joints were made watertight by the use of paint and putty. Through the bottom board of the upper trough rows of holes were bored three-eighths of an inch in diameter. Lengths of three-eighths dowelling, planed flat on



may be adopted. In this case the rain pipe is fixed close to the window, and the water as it falls is collected in a trough. Perfect drainage must be arranged in both instances.

Here is a description of a water effect that was most successfully staged. The scene was the interior of a room with a large bay window overlooking a garden. During the course of the play a storm arose, and when it was nearly over the windows were flung open and the audience saw the rain falling. This is how it was arranged. A long deep wooden trough shaped to fit the window was securely fixed to the framework of the window by means of strong iron brackets. A second

one side and cut into pieces about three inches long, were hammered into the holes, leaving the bottom edge flush with the bottom of the trough. Small sprigs were nailed into the centre of each piece of dowelling, leaving about half an inch protruding. To the head of each sprig lengths of strong thread were attached. The thread was long enough to reach the bottom trough. The thread was passed through the space left by the flattened side of the dowel and led down to the trough at stage level. When all the dowels had been threaded, the ends of the thread were made fast to a shaped length of metal electric wire casing that was laid in the bottom trough. The weight of the metal casing was supported by lengths of fishing line placed at suitable intervals to lessen the risk of the threads being broken when the scene was struck. When the effect was required the upper trough was gently filled with water

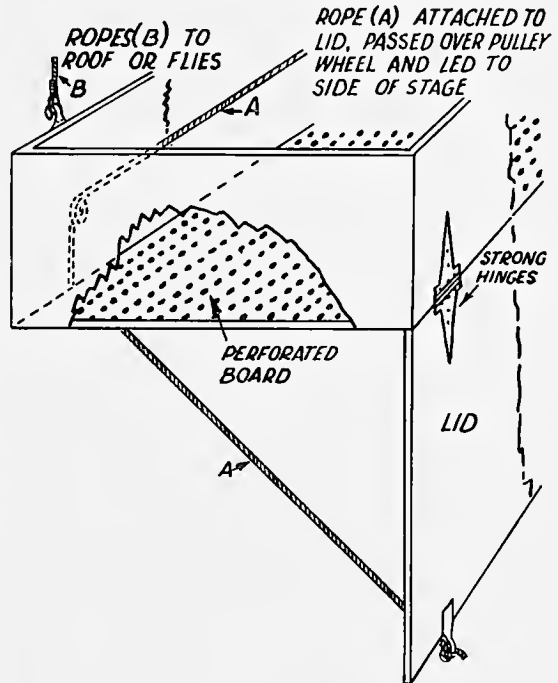
from a tank in the flies and the water trickling down the flattened side of the dowel ran, drop by drop, down the thread into the bottom trough. The "dropping" effect will be spoilt if too much wood is planed from the side of the dowelling, and it will be advisable to experiment on a small scale before building the apparatus. In the particular effect I have described the upper trough filled once held sufficient water to supply rain that took fifteen minutes to fall and the bottom trough was large enough to hold all the water that fell. Amber floods lit up the effect, which seen from the front was beautiful.

Falling rain may also be suggested by having a long box or trough, fitted with a bottom that has been generously perforated with holes sufficiently large to allow the passage of rice. To the bottom front edge of the box is hinged a long tin or wooden shutter that can be opened and closed by means of cords led through strong screw eyes and over guide wheels fixed to the side of the box. To counter the pull on the box when the shutter is being worked a strong cord or wire should be fastened to the opposite end of the box and the wall. The box is filled with rice and when the shutter is dropped the falling rice, illuminated with amber floods, is most effective. The rice can be caught in a trough or it may fall on to a stage cloth that can be taken up quickly in order to avoid unnecessary waste of time if further scenes are to be set.

Lamb says that "A play is said to be well or ill acted in proportion to the scenical illusion provided," and whilst this may be true in the case of some plays the theatre has moved since the days when one courted death amidst a struggling mob frantically fighting and pushing its way through a narrow door set flat in the wall, risking broken limbs in the mad race up winding stairs that seemed never to end, and then, breathless, making a breakneck descent to get a front seat in the gallery. A word of warning is perhaps necessary to the beginner, especially to one whose ambition it is to become a producer, or to one who aspires to climb the Everest of dramatic authorship, and that is always to remember that stage effects as "effects" should never be overdone. There is sometimes a tendency to stress some particular effect, or some unusual mechanical device never before used on the stage, and whilst the desire to

make a play successful is natural enough the danger of overdoing things is always present. Effects should be of secondary importance unless, of course, the play has been written solely as a vehicle for staging some wonderful effect, when any means are legitimate, but it is disastrous to the success of any ordinary play if an effect is so startling that the curiosity of the audience is

### END VIEW OF RICE BOX



aroused as to how it is arranged. This question may become so urgent to some of them that what happens afterwards, and what really matters, is forgotten altogether, and their only memory of the play is that it was "that" play in which they saw a horse-race on the stage. The name of the play itself was of no importance. It is forgotten.

Much can be done by intelligent suggestion. The audience is always pleased to be able to anticipate what is to happen later on in the play and a skilful dramatist persuades his audience to believe that they alone are omniscient, that the actors and actresses on the stage are the only ones who are ignorant of their ultimate fate, and makes their words and actions carry out this belief. Craig

says that by means of suggestion you may bring on the stage a sense of all things, the rain, the sun, the wind, the snow, the hail, etc., and in saying this he may have had in mind Shakespeare, who, by dialogue, conveyed whatever he wished by subtle touches. Take *Macbeth* for instance. In the opening scene of the first act we are told that it is "An open space. Thunder and Lightning. Enter three witches." There is no mention of rain, but the first witch speaks—

When shall we three meet again  
In thunder, lightning, and *rain*.

The italics are mine, but there is no further need for description. Similarly in *The Tempest* we are "On a ship at sea. A storm with thunder and lightning," and the vileness of the weather is emphasized by stage directions that read "enter Mariner, wet."

If we wish to convey the fact that it is raining, one of the characters may enter with an umbrella that is dripping wet and wearing a wet mackintosh or sou'wester and oilskins. New oilskins look shiny and seem wet and old oilskins may be drenched with water immediately before going on the stage. If the character has to have a wet, bedraggled appearance an old suit or dress can be "made up" with paint, varnish, or distemper, according to the material of the dress, or streaks of shiny material such as American oilcloth or satin of a suitable colour may be sewn on to the portions of the dress that receives, or is exposed to, the full force of the rain. A sense of falling rain may be conveyed by dimming lights, a shrug of the shoulders, an upward glance, and when one's coat collar is turned up and the coat buttoned there is no doubt whatever that rain is falling.

It is a peculiar fact that although the theatre of old had every facility for staging storms of rain, rain as a spectacle was neglected. Realistic fires and other risky devices were popular and many disastrous fires, attended by a regrettable loss of life, made it imperative that some means be adopted to minimize the risk of danger. In 1791 the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, was demolished and after being rebuilt was opened on 21st April, 1794, with a production of *Macbeth*. The spirit of the times is reflected in the Epilogue, written by George Colman the Younger and spoken by Miss Farren. Here is an extract that is worth re-

peating if only for the sake of "effects" it mentions—

Our pile is rock more durable than brass,  
Our decorations gossamer and gas.  
Weighty yet airy in effect our plan,  
Solid though light—like a thin alderman.  
"Blow wind, come wrack" in ages yet unborn,  
"Our castle's strength shall laugh a siege to scorn."  
The very ravages of fire we scout,  
For we have wherewithal to put it out.  
In ample reservoirs our firm reliance,  
Whose streams set conflagrations at defiance.  
Panic alone avoid; let none begin it,  
Should the flame spread, sit still, there's nothing  
in it.

We'll undertake to drown you all in half a minute,  
Behold, obedient to the prompter's bell,  
Our tide shall swell and real waters swell.  
No river of meandering pasteboard made,  
No gentle tinkling of a tin cascade,  
No brook of broadcloth shall be set in motion,  
No ships be wrecked upon a wooden ocean;  
But this pure element its course shall hold,  
Rush on the scene, and o'er our stage be rolled.

(*Here the scene rises and discovers the water, etc., etc.*)

How like you our aquatics? Need we fear,  
Some critic with a hydrophobia here,  
Whose timid caution caution's self might tire,  
And doubts if water can extinguish fire?  
If such there be, still let him rest secure;  
For we have made "assurance doubly sure"  
Consume the scenes, your safety yet is certain—  
*Presto*—for proof let down the iron curtain.

(*Here the iron curtain is let down.*)

The Epilogue continues and at its close the iron curtain is drawn up and discovers the statue of Shakespeare under a mulberry tree. *The theatre was again burnt down five years later.*

Much valuable and unexpected information regarding the conditions that obtained in the theatre of old is to be found in many of these ancient Epilogues, and they well repay the trouble of reading. Frequently the information is hidden away in the folds of some lengthy discourse where it is likely to be overlooked. They were usually written to grace some festive occasion and were spoken by some celebrated actor or actress or by the author himself. In one Epilogue the advent of gas was welcomed more for its heating qualities—keeping an audience warm was a difficult matter in those days—than as an illuminant. Much capital was made out of the use of unusual stage effects; yet strange to say some of these effects are still being used in the theatre of to-day.

## CHOOSING THE PRODUCER

By DUMAYNE WARNE

*Author [with Phil Forsyth] of "The House," "The Ultimate Revue," "Second Thoughts," etc.*

THE ordinary way of attacking the problem of whom to appoint as producer for an amateur operatic society is to decide first of all on how much can be afforded as salary and then to secure the best person available for the money. But this is not quite the right way.

Of course, the question of "How much can we afford?" will have to be answered, but it is not the first thing to be considered.

The proper course is to decide what kind of producer you want; then, having decided on that, to see how much the kind of producer you want is going to cost. You may find he will not cost anything. As in so many other matters, the lazy way is to walk into the market and to buy the most expensive thing, on the principle that it will probably be the best. Probably it will. But will it be the best for you? An expensive instrument of any kind costs a lot of money, but, at the same time, it requires a great deal of skill to manipulate properly. It is probably equipped with all sorts of devices, the use of which is unnecessary for the purposes of a novice, even if he were technically equipped to handle them, which he is not.

A really first-class professional producer will certainly be expensive. It is, however, true that nothing is at all likely to go wrong while he is in charge. But the talent at the disposal of a new operatic society is almost certain to be such that the art of the first-class producer is considerably hampered. In fact, as he will have to spend most of his time in grounding the company in the rudiments of their hobby and will not have much leisure for polishing, he will not be able to use the skill for which his extra salary is paid.

Having decided, then, that the most expensive producer is not necessarily going to be the most suitable for your purpose, the next thing to decide is what kind of producer *is* going to be.

Here you have to consider what kind of play you have chosen. In this connexion one should think of a producer as the man who projects a

play upon the stage in a similar way to that used by a painter who projects his picture on to the canvas. And because one would not ask a landscape painter who usually works in oils to do an impressionist caricature in sealing wax, one should not expect a producer of grand opera to be an expert at revue.

So, having decided that your play is to be a musical comedy or a light opera, etc., see that your prospective producer is known to have experience in the kind of play that you have chosen, or that you have some definite reason for employing him if he has not.

In the ordinary way, what the new amateur society wants is a man with a thorough knowledge of practical stagecraft. That is to say, of dialogue, movement, ensembles, music, and also of the mechanical departments, such as lighting and scenery. This sounds a tall order, but actually it is the stock-in-trade of hundreds of professional stage managers. One is not asking for a lot of high flown, "arty" production, but for practical common-sense knowledge of how to get a play over, with, perhaps, somewhat limited technical and mechanical appliances, together with the patience and understanding that are necessary to teach a company of beginners and to imbue them with the spirit that makes for successful productions. This spirit which, once developed, is of more value to a society than anything else, consists of, prosaically, such things as an appreciation of the value of speed, correct positioning, smiling, etc., and, aesthetically, of personal self-repression for the benefit and success of the show as a whole. In other words, team spirit.

We seem now to have established the fact that what a new society wants of a producer is someone who is sound rather than brilliant, patient with an inexperienced company, and familiar with the work or the type of work that is to be attacked.

The next thing is, "Where do we look for this person?" and may not the answer be: "In your own ranks?" Is there not among the band of

enthusiasts who are joined together to launch a new society one person who is competent to undertake a production? If there is, he should be more than ever the best man for the purpose, for not only will he already be aware of the difficulties that face him, but, because he is interested in the formation of the society, he will be prepared patiently to overcome them and to shepherd the enthusiastic but incompetent company along the winding and difficult path that leads to acting.

#### AMATEUR STATUS

An amateur, by the way, is a person who produces plays for nothing, not one who accepts an honorarium of about £25 after the show, or one whose expenses for the production reach a total that is about the same as the fee that would have been paid to a professional producer.

Any system of secretly paying producers in this way is much to be deplored, as it does a great deal of harm to the Amateur Movement.

But there is another aspect that must be considered. It reflects the spirit of "A prophet is not without honour, etc."

Some amateurs find it difficult to submit to the imposition of discipline by one who has been a colleague, perhaps in another production, especially if there is a feeling that the producer is little, if any, more competent to do the job than the other experienced members.

And if enough members feel like this, the entire show, or even, eventually, the society may be wrecked. Production is a matter of discipline, and discipline is impossible if members of the company question the authority of the producer. But if they know him well enough they certainly will question it when he annoys them, as he is almost bound to do from time to time. A producer's fee is a small thing compared with the life of a society.

An amateur brought in from outside is in rather a different position from an ordinary member of a society who has been promoted. The fact that he is a guest and a stranger ensures him a degree of politeness and respect that may be denied a fellow member. His credentials will, in any case, be made the most of by the committee who invite him to work for the society, and even if they are not strictly accurate it will be difficult for any member to question them.

So it seems that the mere fact of the appointment of a professional or an amateur as a producer is not likely, of itself, to make or mar the show. What is required is that the producer, whether amateur or professional, should be properly equipped to deal with the contemplated production, bearing in mind that a new society will lack experience in a number of matters that an old established one will know quite well, and that he should be able to inculcate the beginnings of stagecraft and team spirit. This is the only possible way to give a new society a satisfactory send off.

You must no more appoint a member of a society because he is popular, unless you are sure that he is competent, than a man to whom you pay a few pounds because it sounds better to have a professional.

But because we are dealing with amateur societies that are working for the love of the game, we should try to be amateur throughout. I hope that my many professional-producer friends will not think harshly of me when I preach this gospel. But I do believe that the amateur stage should be amateur throughout, and that the perfect amateur society is the one which not only does the strutting on the stage, but which also writes its own plays, builds its own scenery, and makes its own costumes.

#### SOUND TRAINING

In my opinion, the way to obtain this is not by employing incompetent producers merely because they are amateurs. This will merely breed incompetent actors and therefore more incompetent producers. And so on *ad infinitum*. The proper process is to engage conscientious and hard working professionals who will carefully teach their companies, so that in time the exceptionally talented will be fit to take over the productions and thereby provide another sad case of the dog biting the hand of the feeder. Actually, the exceptionally talented will absorb all that a producer has in him to teach, whether he likes it or not.

The question, then, of the appointment of an amateur or a professional producer is one for the managements of societies to decide.

There is one other point that requires to be discussed before any definite arrangement is entered into with an individual. Assuming that a choice has been made of a likely person, it is



necessary to examine the way in which he will work in order to see if his plans will fit in with the requirements of the members of the society. For example, if a professional producer is to be employed who is resident a long distance from the place of rehearsal, it may be necessary for him to stay in the town during the period of rehearsal. Since this would mean that he would be quite unable to accept any other work during the time, either the rehearsals would have to be compressed into as short a period as possible, compatible with an effective production, or the society would have to resign itself to the payment of a fee that would make it an economic proposition for him to stay in the town for a longer period.

For a society that is prepared to rehearse almost every night for a month, the music having already been taught to the company, the first of the above methods is suitable. But for a society the members of which can rehearse only, say, once a week, for a long period, something different must be devised.

A compromise that is sometimes adopted is to arrange for the producer to attend the place of rehearsal for a week, or perhaps a fortnight, several months before the production and then to leave it to the local staff to work up what he has outlined until his return a few weeks before the production.

#### EMPLOYING A PROFESSIONAL PRODUCER

I am now going to assume that all the pros and cons have been weighed up, and a decision reached that there is no amateur available who is suitable to be entrusted with the production. So the Committee are faced with the fact that they must employ a professional whether they like it or not, and if the Society is really very new, it is possible that, even after having reached such a decision, they will not know what sort of fee the kind of man they want would expect to receive.

There will probably be on the Committee one or more members who can recommend a professional who is prepared to undertake the production for a surprisingly low figure. Subsequent examination of the position may reveal the fact that this member is a friend of the gentleman in question, and his engagement may savour of a charity that the Committee man would like to bestow. It may, of course, reveal the fact that the Committee have the opportunity of securing the

services of a person who would ordinarily be beyond their reach. But it is a curious thing that members of committees, otherwise of unquestionable integrity, will have not the slightest compunction in securing the appointment of producer for a friend, whether he be the most suitable or not.

#### COMPETENCE AND COST

This is not altogether surprising, for any amateurs of experience (and there are bound to be some in the newest of new societies) will be certain to have had reason to become familiar with producers and to have earned the friendship of one or two of them. Although this may prove to be of the greatest advantage to a society, for finding a producer, unless somebody can recommend one, is a very difficult task, it is undesirable that an eloquent member of a Committee should be able to foist a personal friend on to the company because nobody else knows enough about engaging a producer to examine his claims properly from the point of view of competence and cost.

The competence point of view is a particularly difficult one; practically the only tests that can be applied are such things as finding out, by means of writing to the secretary of the society, if his other productions have been successful; and by ascertaining if his previous employers are in the habit of re-engaging him.

With regard to the question of cost, there are certain things that may be borne in mind that define the position much more accurately. For example, if your man is a whole-time professional he expects to make a living wage while he is producing a play; perhaps a little over if he is to reserve anything for the periods of enforced idleness that members of the theatrical profession are unfortunately obliged to face. His living wage, therefore, will vary according to the amount of success that he has achieved in his career. Ten pounds a week is not an unreasonable salary for one who has risen very nearly to the top of the tree, but when an amateur society is faced with having to pay this for a period of two months, and perhaps an hotel bill as well, it will be seen that it may easily find that it has undertaken to expend something like £100 on the producer alone.

The ordinary run of persons who produce amateur societies may not expect to earn as much

as £10 a week, and a difference of £2 or £3 here means a difference of £15 to £25 during a course of rehearsals lasting a couple of months. Supposing also that your man happens to live in the same town, or sufficiently nearby to get there with very little expense or wear and tear to the human frame, you will not be faced with his having to include an hotel bill in the charge for production; this might lop another £20 or £30 off the total. All this seems to point to the fact that a man may be secured, who is anything from thoroughly competent to really brilliant, for a fee that will vary between £50 and £100.

#### REHEARSALS

The period of stage rehearsals, variable, of course, is usually about two months. Singing, dancing, and reading rehearsals may have been going on for as long or longer than this beforehand, but in these the producer is not interested. He will expect to find the singing (he may prefer to find that the dialogue and dancing have not been tackled) ready for him, but he is not concerned as to how it is done, unless the circumstances are exceptional, such as the producer being engaged also as musical director.

It is usually a condition of the contract that a producer should hold himself at the uninterrupted disposal of the society by which he is engaged from the time that rehearsals begin. If, however, two societies that are situated sufficiently near to one another to share the services of a producer can do so without this militating against the success of one performance or the other, it is possible that they may thus be able to secure an entirely suitable person at a much lower cost to each of them than if either had to bear it separately.

This brings one to a consideration of how much the conducting of a single rehearsal is worth. For the benefit of those who have never had the opportunity, or the misfortune, to take a rehearsal of a musical production, I may say that it is, mentally and physically, even under favourable conditions, a most exhausting pursuit. The effort of driving the life and fire that burn within one into a body of unresponsive and apparently unintelligent actors (in large numbers all actors, amateur or professional, seem to become unresponsive and unintelligent) is such as to leave the producer at the end of an evening, especially

if he has had a good deal of imaginative or inventive work to do, in a condition that is not far from prostration.

It does not seem unreasonable that a competent producer should expect to get a guinea for an evening of his labours, although for a series, so to speak, he might be prepared to accept less. Supposing, then, that you have thirty rehearsals or so, your producer will cost you about thirty guineas. But if you have an appreciably smaller number, and he will accept less than a guinea each for a series, you might conceivably get down as low as twenty guineas.

The last point that has to be cleared up, supposing that all this time a Committee have been considering what sort of man they should require without having any particular individual in mind, is where, when they have made up their minds, they are to find him.

An amateur can only be found by personal contact. It is possible that one might be secured by advertisement in the *Agony* column of the daily Press, but I have never heard of this method being adopted. Ordinarily he will be suggested by someone on the Committee; more often still, he himself will be a member of it; in fact, he will probably be one of those primarily concerned with the organization.

#### METHODS OF APPROACH

There are, on the other hand, various means by which a professional producer may be obtained. The first of these is, again, personal contact and recommendation. The second is by hearsay and by inquiry of the secretaries of other societies. The advertisements of the theatrical papers may be searched to useful purpose, but care should be taken before engaging anyone who is discovered by this method to check qualifications and references. The last method, and perhaps the best, is to write to the secretary of such an organization as the National Operatic and Dramatic Association or the British Drama League (although the latter deals only with drama producers, I believe) stating the requirements and asking for suggestions. It is certain that anyone recommended by either of these bodies will be competent and trustworthy, and that his fee will be proportionate to his accomplishments.

# A TALK WITH THE MUSICAL DIRECTOR

By D. GRAHAM DAVIS

Editor of "The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal"

IT goes without saying that the utmost sympathy, understanding, and co-operation between producer and musical director are absolutely essential. Not only are these attributes necessary to obtain the requisite balance between the musical and dramatic sides of the operas, but constant arguments between these two functionaries are scarcely conducive to good discipline within the company. These elements are best found where the producer is his own musical director. Alas, such a state of affairs is one of those much desired wishes that border on the ideal. It is true that the two functions have been, and still are, combined in one individual, but it is difficult to expect sufficient power and knowledge to be forthcoming from one person, especially if he, or she, be an amateur, so we must continue in the supposition that producer and musical director are separate—each with a brain and a will of his own.

The study of Sullivan is not so greatly evidenced as that of Gilbert's works and methods. A musical director has, thus, to be chosen solely for his musicianship, while the choice of producer can be limited to one with particular knowledge of the requirements of this art form. The musician gets but little opportunity for studying Sullivan, who is generally ignored at musical academies, and the inaccessibility of his opera scores puts this study out of court for the private student. Therefore a musician, be he ever so highly trained and skilled in orchestral and choral conducting—one who may add all the degrees of musical scholarship to his name—may well be open to accept advice on these operas from the producer.

Sullivan's music gives little opportunity for original or individual reading. It has been found that Sullivan's *tempi* must be strictly kept. Too fast a pace tends to destroy the inherent repose of these works, while taking the music slowly makes them drag and lose their delightful rhythm. When, therefore, the score indicates an *allegro*, a musical director will be doing himself, and the

opera, a disservice by allowing his fancy to substitute, on the one hand, an *andante* or, on the other, a *presto*. The phrasing, too, is well indicated in the scores and band parts, and should be strictly adhered to.

Without laying down any hard or fast rule, it might be suggested that the musical director should defer to the producer on any question where the music is subject to dramatic action. Thus if the producer feels that some such number is being taken too slowly or too quickly for the full effectiveness of the accompanying action, his demand should be complied with. Similarly, the producer should be content to take a back seat, once the necessary gestures and positions are known, while a number such as "Strange Adventure" (*The Yeomen of the Guard*) or "Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes" is being studied.

Some musical directors, while working hard with the singers, are apt to let the orchestra look after itself until the last moment. Sometimes, in fact, the company does not meet the orchestra until the dress rehearsal. Sometimes this same occasion is the first time at which the instrumental players have had a full rehearsal together. One knows the difficulty of getting an orchestra together, especially when, as is so often the case, it numbers professional or semi-professional artists. But, with such people, a minimum of rehearsals will work wonders. The dress rehearsal should be entirely the producer's affair; the musical director, naturally, enters into it in the event of bad singing, or mistakes. It must certainly not be regarded as an orchestral rehearsal. This is the first time the artists have put on their costumes; probably it is the first time they have rehearsed on the stage itself. The producer and company will have quite enough to worry over without (through no fault of their own) frequently having to stop because something is not right in the orchestra well. If the company and orchestra have had even one rehearsal together, then the inevitable strangeness of leaving the piano for the

many instruments will have gone, and those on both sides of the curtain will pull together as they should.

A small orchestra is better than a large one. Sullivan used a medium-sized orchestra of some thirty instrumentalists, of whom all but seven were string or wood-wind players. It is, therefore, spoiling the balance to employ too great a proportion of brass. In many of the operas a good string orchestra with one or two wind instruments and

as he would have were the actual full score by his side. This method may take more time and space than would the study of the more compact score; yet it is all that is possible and quite adequate for the purpose in view.

A subject upon which musical directors often ask for guidance is that of those songs which, although still printed in the scores, are omitted from the actual performances of the professional company. Should this lead be followed, it is



Photo by J. W. Debenham

"WHEN DARKLY LOOMS THE DAY. . ."

The Finale to the First Act of *Iolanthe* is full of action. In this, and any such case, the musical direction should be subordinated to the production

a piano will be found to be as adequate, if not entirely so convincing, as a full Sullivan orchestra. At all events, this compromise is better than going to the other extreme, and drowning the voices with an orchestra which, for size and power, would do credit to a Wagnerian production in an immense opera house.

Musical directors are apt to complain that the full orchestral scores of the operas are not available for their study. This is a legitimate grievance, but neither insuperable nor so important as some would believe. With every set of band parts hired to an amateur society there is a vocal score for the conductor's use. This is copiously annotated, including snatches here and there of the more prominent pieces of orchestration which are not clear from the vocal score. With the aid of this conductor's copy and the actual band parts, the musical director should have no difficulty in making as good a study of Sullivan's orchestration

asked, or should the missing numbers be reinstated?

There is a good deal to be said on both sides of the question. If the omitted number is needed for the development or dramatic continuity of the opera it should not, in any circumstances, be cut—for one way in which Gilbert and Sullivan opera differs from musical comedy is that it does not contain detached songs; that is, all musical numbers should have a direct bearing on the plot. For the same reason, no song should disappear for the purpose of ending the performance a few minutes earlier than would be the case otherwise. On considering several of the numbers omitted from the professional renderings, one must admit that there seem to be sufficient reasons for advising the amateur musical director to leave them out of his performance.

The duet in *Ruddigore*, "The Battle's Roar," comes at a point where it is manifestly unsuitable.

When it is sung there remains the feeling that the play is being unnecessarily held up to allow the two principal vocalists a chance to display their powers, and the main object of the situation—that Dick is supposed to be pleading for Robin—is lost. This detracts from the fun of the next scene. Also, the words put into Dick's mouth are scarcely consonant with his "rough, common-sailor fashion."

That this duet has beauty and melody cannot

ture," in *The Yeomen of the Guard*. At the best it is a make-shift; little more than a pleasant jingle, inserted when it was found that Elsie and Fairfax required more time than was then allotted to change into their wedding garments. The duet comes at an inappropriate time. The short comedy scene between Dame Carruthers and Meryll, which precedes it, is far more fitting to the tragic *dénouement* towards which the opera is so steadily working than a comic duet with a



Photo by J. W. Debenham

"IT IS SUNG WITH A SIGH AND A TEAR IN THE EYE"

Here, although there is plenty of action, it is the singing that counts. As soon as the positions, gestures, etc., are fixed, the producer should be content to leave matters to the musical director

be denied, and it is a pity that it should be lost. In all trepidation, I once advanced a plea that it might be restored—but to the second act. Rather than lose it altogether, it was urged, the "sacrilege" might be permitted of having it sung after the entrance of Richard and Rose, just before Sir Ruthven comes on with his "So-ho, pretty one!" At such a point the duet would be quite in the picture. I am not suggesting that amateurs should take the law into their own hands, and make this change—although I have learned that it has been done successfully by a professional company in Australia. As matters stand, all that is open to amateur societies is to keep the duet where it occurs in the score, or to omit it altogether.

Another instance of a musical number which is frankly out of place is that of "Rapture, Rap-

sprightly rhythm. Facilities for a fairly quick change must indeed be sadly lacking if this extra padding really becomes necessary.

A very difficult piece of music occurs soon after this duet; Elsie's appeal (sung kneeling), "Leonard, My Loved One." This number may well prove a stumbling block to the most talented amateur soprano, as it has taxed even professional artists. There is precedent, for this reason, for its omission, though it should be sung if it be humanly possible to do so—for it has some bearing on the story.

Lady Blanche's solo in *Princess Ida*, "Come Mighty Must," owes what excellence it possesses as a lyric less to its philosophy than to some ingenious plays upon words, such as "Whate'er your tense, ye are imperfect all." The air, too, is dull, although there is a pleasant echo of the music

through which Dr. Daly speaks his felicitations to Alexis in *The Sorcerer*. The full effectiveness of the song depends on the audience hearing every word, and it is a very difficult number to sing so that each syllable is distinct. So, besides holding up the gay development of the act after an already sufficiently slow opening, it becomes little better than a dirge-like, polysyllabic chant.

Two other instances of "musical editing" may be examined out of those that remain. One at least of these must depend for a final decision on the vocal talent of the actor. The Major-General's ballad in the second act of *The Pirates of Penzance*, "Softly sighing to the River," is usually sung with only one verse, but with the words and music of the second refrain. The reason for this may lie in the vocal deficiencies of the actor at the time at which the song was cut down. A better reason seems to be that the audience does not expect a straight song of this nature from a purely comedy character. On reflection, this objection is unreasonable, for what is more probable than that this conscience-stricken General might find solace from such a song, rendered by, and to, himself? But one cannot expect an audience to apply logical reflection towards the end of a performance of a comic opera. The audience, too, is in a state of expectancy; there is the excitement of the coming conflict (eagerly anticipated, and now imminent) between

the police and the pirates. This alone would justify the disappearance of the second verse.

No satisfactory explanation has ever been given for the deletion of Sir Ruthven's recitative and solo from the second act of *Ruddigore*, "Away, Remorse!". This was never popular, and was not inserted in the opera when it was first revived, in 1920. With its omission the baronet has certainly a better, if rather precipitous, exit. Having dispatched his faithful retainer to carry out the bidding of his ghostly ancestors, Ruthven rushes from the scene of his mental and physical tortures. In such a plight, not even the most light-hearted of Gilbert's comedy parts would wish to sing the customary patter song!

Reflection seems to point to the advisability of the amateur musical director following the example of his professional colleague, for in all the instances I have given sufficiently good reasons for the omission exist. Certainly they are sufficient to outweigh any repugnance for deleting a bar of Sullivan or a line of Gilbert. Sullivan himself deleted numbers before production (one of his most popular songs almost met this fate); is it not reasonable to suppose that he would equally welcome the omission of other songs to which such objections as those here stated can be made: songs which he himself would doubtless hold as marring the whole-hearted attractiveness of his and his collaborator's work?

# THE ROLE OF THE CHOREOGRAPHER—I

By ARNOLD L. HASKELL

*Founder of the Camargo Society, Director of the Ballet Club, etc.*

THE whole success or failure of ballet depends on the delicate adjustment of those elements of which it is composed; The Music; The Décor; The Literary and Dramatic; The Dancing. Different periods have stressed one or more of these elements at the expense of the whole, with the result that ballet has come very near to extinction at times, but such is its vitality and its justification as the soul of every form of dramatic art that it has lived on. In England, immediately before the advent of Diaghileff, ballet was regarded as a light after-dinner entertainment, to which one could drop in at any time, or as the poor relation of opera, which made it bearable to the unmusical and the inartistic. Yet when we look at the composition of the opera, the same as ballet save for the important substitution of the human voice for the dancing, we see how much more perfect the ballet is *in practice* as an art form. Opera is a spectacle that is designed to appeal to the ear and the eye. Theoretically and on rare occasions, it may do so, but in actual fact the singer's whole training is diametrically opposed to grace in movement or to dramatic ability within the particular convention. It must be difficult enough to find the singer with the voice for the particular rôle, but if her attributes must also be those I have previously discussed it would never be possible to present an opera at all. The result is that opera is not true to its own convention, save in the rare case of a Chaliapine, while the ballet is now as a rule consistent in practice as well as in theory. It took the genius of a Diaghileff to realize to the full all that ballet could contain, and to force that realization on to the cultured public of Europe, so that at the present day the young composer and painter finds his inspiration in ballet, and not in opera.

For our own practical purposes here modern ballet has its beginnings with Diaghileff as the directing brain, literally the G.H.Q. of the diverse arts, Alexander Benois, and, later, Bakst for the *décor*, various romantic composers for the music,

and Fokine, Karsavina, and Nijinsky for the dancing, which had already been perfected by the wonderful system of the Imperial Schools, and which was now by Diaghileff only used to its fullest advantage as part of a fine art form. If any of these partners is the predominant one it is dancing, in the sense that ballet being a theatrical art basically, "the dance is the thing," and it is the dance that has formed the link with tradition and that has given us continuity since the days of Louis XIV. It was for the dance that the whole expensive machinery was set into motion and it was for the dance that composers wrote their music and artists designed their costumes. It was the whim of a dancer with shapely legs, La Camargo, which gave us the beginnings of our modern ballet costume and influenced the whole progress of our art. It is important to insist on these points because, immediately the dance assumes an inferior position to the other elements, we are faced with the perfectly logical position that marionettes would serve the producers fully as well as vehicles for their music and *décors*. When the dance takes on an undue position we are still left with ballet, though it may possibly be bad ballet. I can, in fact, perfectly well conceive of the dance unaided by artist or musician as an art form, delighting by its purity of line, much as a fine drawing does, although I can see that it would appeal to too few as a theatrical entertainment. It is a point, however, to be borne in mind; at one extreme the triumph of the individual, worth while only as long as the individual is worth while; at the other extreme the complete degradation of the individual, who assumes the position of a puppet. The Greeks, who were wiser in these things than we are, gave to the Muse of dancing, Terpsichore, a position of great importance. This being the case, let us discuss the dancing and the dance arrangement first. We have already covered the subject from another aspect, that of the dancer.

Dancing as we understand it in a theatrical sense is organized movement, undertaken to



express either something definite, yet something that words cannot express, or to arouse emotion in a far more subtle manner by its contrasting lines. We are on difficult ground here, and this needs some elaboration. If aesthetics have a definite physiological foundation, and depending as they do upon the mechanism of the eye, there is a



KARSAVINA IN "THE SWAN LAKE"

close relationship however many other considerations there are. Then there are certain lines which, based upon the laws of optics, "soothe" the eye, while others are obviously irritating and difficult to look upon. This would also apply in the case of colour. Certain papers published by the French Académie des Sciences, outlining the experiments of the Russian sculptor-scientist Yourievitch, make this assumption appear perfectly reasonable, and certainly help us in our appreciation of dancing. According to Yourievitch, the move-

ment culminating in the pose known as *The Arabesque* is pleasing for the definite optical reason that the line from the back of the head to the tip of the toe, the gentle slope, is one of the lines that it is easiest for the eye to take in and caress, while the angles formed by the legs and the trunk of the body form a contrast that draws attention to the gentle slope and saves it from monotony. Whether these complicated experiments are correct or not, this conclusion seems entirely reasonable and is helpful.

Dancing in ballet, however, does not depend on one individual or on such a simple combination of line. To take a helpful analogy, the dancer is a note, the ballet a whole score; or better still the dancer is a simple melody, the ballet a complicated orchestration where several things are going on at once. The rôle of the choreographer, the actual creator of ballet, is to *orchestrate dancing*. His place in the arts is half-way between that of the musician and of the painter of large groups. He differs from the first because his means of expression are plastic, from the second because it is not static, and the group is merely the climax, the full stop to his phrase. In practice he cannot create ideally because he must work in harmony with his music and with the actual physical material assigned to him. He is akin to the painter again when he thinks in terms of ballerina and *corps de ballet*; the relation between foreground and background. It has been argued that the ideal ballet should consist of mass movement with no definite foreground, but I am quite unable to see the point of this. It may produce exceedingly moving results. Mass movement well handled invariably does, but it is only one possibility of an art that should have unlimited possibilities. It is merely another form of the old theatrical argument about the merits and demerits of the "star" system. In ballet practice it is always the "star" who has developed choreography and has been the inspiration of the whole system. The ideal composition of a ballet company from a choreographic point of view is a *corps de ballet* so competent technically that any one of its members could dance a leading rôle, but with sufficient outstanding personalities to act as fuel for inspiration. This was the case in the heyday of the early Diaghileff ballet and there is every indication that it will be the case with its



successor, the magnificently organized Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo. The reason that choreography was not developed to any great extent over a long period of time in the Pavlova Company was due to the inevitable abuse of the "star" system, one genius in surroundings that existed only to draw attention to her. We have in such a case the whole machinery of ballet to exploit what is virtually the concert dance or *divertissement*. The inspiration of Anna Pavlova has fired thousands of girls with ambition, which should bear fruit, and it has given thousands of us memories that we shall always cherish. It has certainly advanced dancing in that way, but it has played a minor rôle, out of proportion with its fame in the development of orchestrated dancing ballet.

The great French *maitre de ballet*, Noverre, in a valuable series of letters has given us some indications of what is expected of the choreographer, and the gist of what he says is surprisingly modern and applicable to present-day conditions.

He postulates a knowledge of painting and art history; "his art has in view the same subject as theirs; a sound knowledge of musical composition." "The choice of good music is as essential to the dance as the choice of words and phrases to the orator." Again on the same subject: "He, the choreographer, will furnish the composer with the principal points of his action." He sees a necessity for a smattering of geometry, another link with the painter. Most important of all, a point that is so frequently neglected in ballet composition, contact with life itself is essential, a contact that has been lost since the days of Noverre himself until found once more by Fokine, whose choreography and ideals need a section on their own. Noverre advises the choreographer to study the jealous man and observe the shades of difference on his face, for, "if the grand passions are suited to tragedy they are no less necessary to pantomime," the very basis of tragedy. The remoteness of ballet choreography to humanity is one of the chief points against this form of dancing that is made by the exponents of other forms of the art. As I have shown, it has been foreseen by a great *maitre de ballet* and put into practice by another, long before these objections were raised.

So many, then, are the attributes required by the choreographer, in excess even of those required by the dancer, that it is not surprising that



MARKOVA IN "THE SWAN LAKE"

Photo by Brewster

there are few who even make the attempt, and in the whole history of the dance only three or four outstanding names arise, Petipa, Fokine, Nijinsky, and Massine being the great masters. It is this fact that gives us the greatest cause of apprehension for the future of ballet, but where there is good dancing material!—and in Tomanova, Markova, Baronova, Riaboushinskaia, Dolin,



PAVLOVA IN AN *Arabesque*

Lifar, Lichine, and many others it exists in abundance—there are great hopes that someone new to make them dance for us will be forthcoming.

There are two conceptions of ballet music; as a mere rhythmic accompaniment, irrespective of its own intrinsic merits or its mood; as an actual “partner” both in mood and movement. The

first conception, the old one, produced much that was admirable (Debussy and Tchaikovsky, greatest of all dance composers), but much more that is unplayable to-day, such as that of Minkus and Pugno, and that is utterly unworthy of the fine choreography that was arranged for it, or of the attention of sensitive and intelligent people. The old we might conveniently label as “ballet music,” bearing in mind the exceptions, the new as “music” with no qualification. Fokine and Isadora Duncan altered that entire position and proved that it was possible to dance to the classics, not only with no disrespect but in a manner that would enhance their prestige. The change that took place in the whole position of ballet can well be imagined when it is realized that before the Fokine reforms it was sacrilege to dance to anything but “ballet music,” while afterwards Beethoven himself was open to the choreographer. This meant an entirely new public to supplement the “tired business man,” and also led to the co-operation of the serious composer such as Stravinsky. This threw a far greater onus on the choreographer, who must now study mood and atmosphere as well as rhythm, and a complex rhythm that was no longer a straightforward accompaniment. At its worst it meant the dictatorship of the composer, and the dancers were completely lost (the puppet situation I have mentioned); at its very best such an harmonious whole as the De Falla-Massine-Picasso *Three Cornered Hat*.

These incursions into theory and recent history are definitely of a practical nature. They cover a curriculum that every pupil should know, if ballet is to be considered as more than a series of difficult, but meaningless, movements.

## HOW TO PRODUCE YOUR PLAY

By CONSUELO M. DE REYES

*Producer, Little Theatre, Citizen House, Bath, and Everyman Theatre, Hampstead; Lecturer in Drama, University College, Exeter*

IN any group much of the success attained must depend upon the producer, whose work it is to translate the play by means of the temperament and technique of the actors. The producer must, therefore, be the ruling artist of the theatre and its unifying force.

Frequently different methods of acting and varying schemes of stage design may be brought forward, but it is for the producer to unite the personality and art of the actors, the work of the scenic designers, the colour schemes of the stage artists, and the suggestions of every single department into a single unity that will most completely express the underlying symbology of the play. The producer's word is therefore law. In France he is known as *régisseur* and a literal translation of this word perhaps most aptly describes his function.

A good producer's name should be the hallmark to any production, and we should all be able to recognize from the producer's name the type of production that we are about to see. Such names as those of C. B. Cochran, Sir Nigel Playfair, and Max Reinhardt recall certain productions that we know are of the essence of the producer's personality, and, consequently, we expect such attributes to appear in all their productions, exactly as we expect a certain method of colour and brushwork to be the attributes of individual painters.

The producer's function is, again, similar to that of the conductor of an orchestra. He has to determine the meaning and spirit of the work and then to translate it through terms of tone and emphasis. From this it follows that the producer must be a leader, possessed of courage and yet of infinite patience. He must not only allow what Gordon Craig calls "the broad sweeps of thought conjured up by a reading of the play" to flow through his work, but he must also be capable of attending to the most minute details in it. Again on him will rest the task of subordinating the art

and personalities of the players to the one task of interpreting the play. No one player, however much his art may be enjoyed by the audience, must be allowed to triumph at the expense of the play, and thus dwarf the climax, and it is because breadth of vision, power of discipline, and the gift of passionate concentration are so rarely found in one individual that first-class producers are rare.

It is the producer's business then to retranslate the author's written words into terms of the theatre. As he reads the play, a certain image of it will arise in his mind and it is his business to give this image in vital form to his audience. He will do this mainly through the medium of movement. A play moves from the moment that the curtain rises to its fall, and in such movement its mood and theme will be expressed. But it does not move at a uniform rate; it may gather speed gradually, then slow down, then quicken, and eventually reach its climax. Each scene will have its own tempo, as well as the entire play, and everything should be subordinate to the main theme of the play. It is a mistake for one producer to copy the work of another, since it will not then be the sincere expression of his personality. Far too many societies study successful plays with a view to giving what can only be at best second-class imitations, frequently alien to the personalities and abilities of the players. In Shakespearean productions there is a tendency to hand down the old business and gags that one generation has obtained from the other; yet such business no longer expresses the modern mood of the players who are translating the play. The open-air productions in Regent's Park in 1933 showed the delight that can be obtained from fresh interpretations of Shakespeare when the producer has revisualized the play in terms of modern life and art.

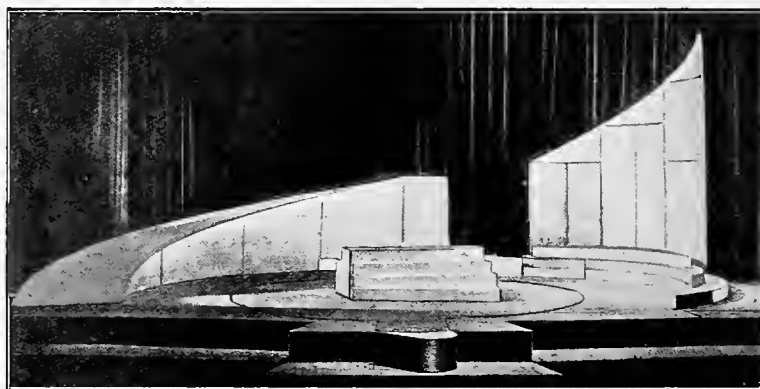
The most common fault in amateur plays is weak production. One frequently attends plays in which the individual acting is good, the setting

skilful, and the costumes pleasing, and yet the play misses its mark. It has no style or definite purpose because the producer has conceived none. On the professional stage skilled actors can, perhaps, cover up this deficiency, although, even then, the effect of the play will be diminished; but on the amateur stage the whole play falls apart unless there is strong direction.

Again, players may suffer from lack of balance. A strong player may overshadow a weak one unless the producer has been careful to tone down

over, it prevents a player being cast always to type, which, however much it may make at the moment for economy and ease of production, must eventually narrow down that player's work. If this rule is accepted from the start of the company, no difficulty should be found in getting newcomers to obey it.

Another serious fault is lack of emphasis at the climax of the play. Every play has its psychological moment up to which everything else has led. Frequently this tends to be overlooked or



SCENE FROM "HENRY VIII" AS PRODUCED AT THE  
CAMBRIDGE FESTIVAL THEATRE

Note use of sectional scenery to promote ease in grouping

the strong player at the same time as he attempted to strengthen the weak one. In comedies there is sometimes a tendency to exaggerate playing (especially where the audience greets such efforts with applause), and the subtle garden of comedy becomes the broad field of farce. Lack of team work is another great danger to be avoided in all productions. Artists are essentially individualists, and it is often due to over-concentration on their own parts that they become oblivious of the need of playing also into the hands of others in the company.

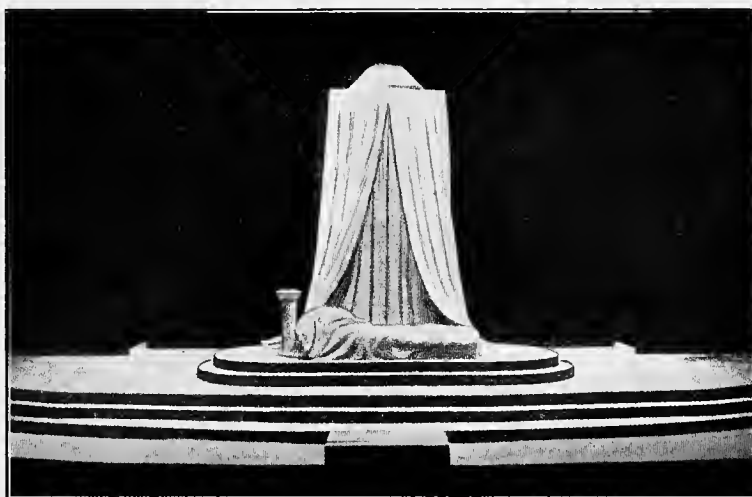
A good play should be like a good game in which the methods of interplay and passing are just as important as the skill of any one individual member in shooting the goal. An amateur company or a Little Theatre should be run on strictly co-operative lines. A leading part in one production should alternate with a walk-on part in the next. The result is not only most salutary, but it successfully eliminates all jealousy. More-

missed, and, consequently, the whole point of the play is lost. "What is the climax of the play?" should be the first question with which producers and players approach the play, as, until this is recognized and fixed, the whole edifice will miss its keystone and become insecure. When the climax is recognized and reached, the playing should become stronger. It is frequently the amateur tendency to "underplay" that conceals the climax. An insistence on exercises in mime is, perhaps, the best corrective to this tendency to underplay, since all mime attitudes call for intensification and exaggeration.

The first work of the producer, after selecting his staff, will be to cast the players, or to select those persons in the group who are best fitted by mental and physical equipment to play each part. This is referred to in the professional theatre as "casting to type." Some educational authorities feel, however, that persons of the opposite type should be chosen, because of the educational

value that lies in a student playing a part that takes him out of himself. Thus, a quiet studious boy would be selected to play a grandiloquent hero, or a precocious modern girl a delicate character from the pages of *Cranford*. Usually, however, players prefer to play those roles that suit them best, and provided that they are not constantly restricted to the same type, this is, perhaps, the best working plan. Having assembled his players, the producer will then "try them out" for various parts. This consists in

if he is given the opportunity, and so for all these reasons an actor should never be allowed to feel that a character has been definitely given to him. The player must know from the start that if someone appears who can play his part better, or if he is unable to work up the part sufficiently, he will be dropped, just as would be the case in a football team. Moreover, such an element of public spirit must be introduced that he himself would desire this for the sake of the company, since it cannot be too clearly insisted that upon



A SIMPLE SETTING FOR "OTHELLO" FROM THE *Théâtre français*  
Note the use of rounded steps and draperies. A contrast in line and design.

asking them to read the suggested play. Each player should have had ample opportunity for familiarizing himself with the text before the actual audition, since even to an experienced player difficulties of punctuation and phrasing may occur at sight. During competitive auditions players are, however, under a great strain, and due allowance should be made for this. A wise director will supplement auditions with informal conversations with the candidates, during which he will be better able to judge how they speak and act. Not only are there good actors who, owing to over-sensitiveness, will always appear at their worst at an audition, but there are also persons who read a part well superficially, but who never greatly improve upon this. The player who makes a bad preliminary impression will frequently get better into "the skin of the part" eventually

the team spirit of the group the ultimate value of the work must depend.

Once the producer has decided upon the play, he will give special study to the various situations or curtains with which each scene closes. Here again the work of production must be brought to an apex, and the situation created by the fall of the curtain must be strong enough to persist in the minds of the audience until the curtain rises again. Frequently producers work to obtain a picture in the rise and fall of their curtain; all the furniture and movements of the scene will then be plotted with these final positions in view.

First of all the producer will map out the exits and entrances of his various characters, the positions of windows, doors, fireplaces, and he will then decide where he will place his furniture, such as chairs, tables, settees, etc., in relation to these.

Many producers find it useful to work with a small model stage, built to scale, which can easily be constructed out of battens and canvas. On this little stage all the principal positions and actions will then be worked out and any necessary adjustments made before the company assemble. Preparatory care in such cases serves to prevent much waste of time and confusion, and once a position has been decided upon for a piece of furniture, it is essential that it should remain in that position or else the blocking of one character by another will probably arise. All action should be planned to seem as natural as possible, and the producer must bear in mind the picture form of his stage canvas, and the fact that it is visible only from the front. Consequently everything must be arranged so that it remains within the angle of vision of every member of the audience.

In order to test that no blocking occurs, and also the audibility of every member of the cast, the producer should constantly vary the place in the auditorium from which he watches the play, and since most theatres have their blind spots, these must be avoided. Directly the players have assembled, the producer will outline to them the main movements of the theme, either by means of his model stage or by personal demonstration. Groupings will then be decided upon, and for this purpose it is advisable to have furniture on the scene at the first rehearsal, as this will have a great influence upon ultimate positions.

The individual acting or business of each player must then be considered, and great care must be taken with all non-speaking players. These silent performers must still be a vital part of the production, and yet any movement or action must be so planned that it does not detract from the principal action. They should either focus their interest on the speaker, so that the attention of the audience is also drawn to that point, or they should provide the background and atmosphere. Many well-known actors support the theory that "good acting is a matter of correct timing," and the necessity of playing for speed cannot be over-emphasized. It is the slick effortless manner in which one actor after another picks up the cues at the exact moment, not allowing

the last words to remain in the air or to be clipped or covered, which marks the good production.

It is obvious that such smooth interplay can be obtained only after frequent practice, and in order to free the producer from much of the routine work of rehearsals it is often very helpful to appoint an assistant-producer from among the members whose work it is to superintend frequent word-rehearsals with the various members of the play. Breakdown, owing to lack of memory, frequently occurs among amateurs, just because the difference in solo and group memorization has been overlooked. An actor may know his part perfectly in the study, but directly he is called upon to synchronize movement and gesture with his words, memory fails him since his attention is being given elsewhere, and the only cure for a nervous or forgetful actor is repeated rehearsal.

The presentative actor of classic drama required round rhetorical speeches that would give him ample opportunity for elocution and the use of sweeping gesture, but the representative actor of to-day requires to speak in terms of common conversation.

Any speech that is at all rhetorical will pull the actor out of the picture, and the highest proof of good workmanship that may be achieved by any contemporary playwright is to persuade his audience that he is not employing any tricks of literary style.

To-day when we visit the theatre, we are instantly able to tell whether the production is according to new or old methods. The new has something about it which arrests our attention and stimulates our interest. It is not merely in externals, the books, chairs, tables may still be there, but it is something in the arrangement and ordering of it that gives us at once stimulation and repose. It is purpose. The new settings are designed to further the main thread of the play, and to give the necessary psychological insight into this or that character. Bare walls, simple lines, harmonious colours, soft lights, these are part of the new stage settings. They suggest reality rather than represent it. And when our imagination is thus stimulated, we make reality real, because in a sense we create it ourselves.

## THE FORMATION OF AN AMATEUR SOCIETY—II

By H. P. HOLLINGDRAKE

*Hon. Secretary, Bolton Operatic Society; Life Member of the Council of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association*

WE will assume that in response to the appeal letter sufficient pledges of financial support have now been received. By the word sufficient is meant a number varying according to the estimated all-in cost of an average production under local conditions and bearing a substantial proportion thereto. For it can with reasonable confidence be predicted that if the society develops on right lines the number of subscribers will steadily increase as the date of the performances approaches.

The acting secretary will now summon a further meeting and to save expense this can be done by advertisement in the local Press as an invitation to all interested persons to attend. There is the additional advantage that a reporter will be sent to "cover" the meeting, which is the start of the publicity campaign.

At that meeting the chairman, or the acting secretary, will give a report or précis of what has taken place up to that date and will announce the result of the circular letter. He should also, for the benefit of those who were not present at the first meeting, reiterate the aims and objects of the society without undue prolixity. After which the following Resolution should be proposed, seconded, and carried in due form—

"That a society to be known as THE ..... AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY for the performance of operas, musical plays, and similar works (in aid of local charities?) be established."

From that moment the society comes into being.

No further constructive work remains to be done at that meeting, for, if my advice has been taken, the chairman will be able to announce that the nucleus of a committee has already been appointed at the earlier meeting and that additional members and officers for the first year will be selected by them. The opportunity should, however, be taken to enrol more subscribers

amongst those present, as there may be many to whom the circular has not been sent, or who have hesitated to reply.

The nucleus committee should meet immediately to elect a chairman, to appoint officers, and to co-opt additional committee men, if necessary. Note: *avoid large committees*. The usual officers are—

President	Hon. Treasurer
Vice-President	Hon. Secretary
Hon. Musical Director	Hon. Acting (or
(or Conductor)	Business) Manager
Hon. Stage Manager	

The Auditor, whether honorary or paid, is *not* an officer. Some societies, for reasons of their own, sub-divide some of the duties of their officers and appoint one or more of the following—

Business Secretary	Programme Secretary
Correspondence	Chorus Master (as
Secretary	distinct from Con-
Patronage Secretary	ductor)
Publicity Manager, and the like	

Little can be said in favour of this system; on the business side the multiplicity of officials or semi-officials tends to the overlapping of duties, which at best are difficult to separate, and on the musical side productions have been marred by the Conductor's unfamiliarity with the work as rehearsed by the Chorus Master in collaboration with the Producer. Much better is it to appoint a competent Secretary to undertake the whole of the business management, with a capable Assistant Secretary for dictation, typing, and committee routine; and the Conductor should be his own chorus master.

The President and Vice-President may quite usefully be figure heads, though not necessarily; but they should both be persons of some local eminence or distinction to attest the *bona fide* status of the society.

The Treasurer holds a position in an amateur

society to which there is no professional counterpart, but he appears through long custom to have survived as a link between the Acting Manager and the society's bankers. Originally he acted as the accountant to the society, but modern methods have so simplified all book-keeping that it would add very little to the sum total of the secretarial work. On the other hand, a Treasurer has to keep a guard on all moneys paid out as well as those paid in to the bank, and in some societies he gives the Acting Manager assistance in checking up the nightly final return at the theatre, or the receipts from acting members and others for ticket vouchers sold in advance. It will be found convenient to appoint as Hon. Treasurer an official of the local bank at which the society's account is kept.

The Stage Manager is concerned wholly with the rehearsal and staging of an opera, and in a well-ordered society he should be under the supervision of the committee in matters of expenditure.

With regard to the Secretary and Acting Manager, experience has proved that the duties of these two officials—particularly where a long list of subscribers has to be handled—are so interlocked that there is substantial advantage in their being entrusted to one man and not two, the Secretary becoming a dual officer as "Hon. Secretary and Acting Manager." It follows that the Secretary cannot also be an acting member on the stage; and indeed it may be laid down that a Secretary never should be. On the principle that "a cobbler should stick to his last," no man, however gifted, can be a success on both sides of the curtain at once. This rule should *never* be broken in an operatic society.

The Committee, when completed, should not exceed 10 members in all, including the officers, and this number gives ample opportunity for the acting members to be directly represented upon it—a useful provision, effecting a liaison between the rank and file and the governing body. It should be understood that members of Committee

and officers hold their appointments from year to year, that is from their election until the close of the next Annual General Meeting at which they are re-elected or their successors appointed.

At their first Meeting the Committee must take steps to draw up their Rules and Constitution, and to obtain the requisite number of acting members. If sufficient applications have not already been received the Secretary should be instructed to insert an advertisement in the local paper—

".....Amateur Operatic Society  
has vacancies for good voices in all parts. Applications *in writing only* to the Secretary,  
Mr..... (address)....."

Note the words "in writing only"; especially if the Secretary is a married man!

The determination of the Rules is best dealt with by a sub-committee in the first instance, as it demands great care and concentration, expert guidance if at all possible, and skill in drafting not unworthy of a lawyer. Here space will only permit one or two practical hints on which reliance can be placed—

1. The Constitution must state clearly whether the society is a charitable organization, and, if so, that *the whole* of its profits (if any) will be devoted to charity.

2. That the Committee, and not the acting members, shall select and cast the works selected for production.

3. That before admission as acting members *all* applicants must submit to an audition before the *full* Committee.

4. That all music rehearsals shall be under the sole control of the Hon. Musical Director and all stage rehearsals under the sole control of the coach.

(This rule prevents unpleasant incidents between the Conductor and Producer in the matter of metronome tempi as rehearsed before staging begins. Remember that many amateur conductors are choir-masters rather than chorus masters and are apt to forget that a musical comedy is not an oratorio!)

5. That acting members must attend not less than 75 per cent of the rehearsals in order to take part in the performances.

6. That any matter not provided for in the Rules as drawn up shall be dealt with by the Committee.







MR. C. B. PURDOM

# THE WORK OF THE PRODUCER

By C. B. PURDOM

*Author of "Producing Plays," etc., Dramatic Critic, Founder of Letchworth Players and Welwyn Garden City Theatre; Hon. Treasurer National Festival of Community Drama; Editor of "New Britain"*

**M**R. ST. JOHN ERVINE in *The Theatre in My Time* described the producer as an affliction: he said that he ought to be abolished; for he wants to see the author as producer. I agree with him to this extent, that the ideal conditions for a play are the author who is an actor producing his own plays. But we get them only rarely—examples are Shakespeare, Molière, Pinero, and Granville-Barker. Usually the author is not an actor, and he seldom has other qualifications as a producer. Certainly he knows his play—but to put it on the stage he must know the theatre too. That is why I regard the first qualification of a producer to be that of experience as an actor: no other experience is its equivalent. To be a scenic designer or an electrician or even a playwright is not enough—he must have some mastery of the stage as an actor.

A producer there must be, however, for a play must have one man responsible for it, just as an orchestra must have a conductor or any group of people engaged on a common task a leader. That is what the producer is, a leader, the man into whose hands is put the responsibility of getting a stage production carried out as a complete thing. He has to know everything about the play, otherwise his work will suffer. He has to know the play itself, the cast, the stage on which it is to be given, and the costumes, scenery, and lighting required. He will have others to work with him; but he must be able to guide them and co-ordinate their work, which means that he must know about it.

Because so much is demanded of the producer he is difficult to find. Good producers on the professional stage are scarce; on the amateur stage they are not often met with. This is not to be wondered at, for not only must a producer have knowledge, but he must possess tact, ability to handle people, teaching capacity, and creative power as an artist. No wonder he is so rare! But so far as my observation goes, we are getting more producers than we had a few years ago on both

the professional and the amateur stage. The craft is being taken seriously. All the same, I should be hard put to it to count on the fingers of one hand the producers working to-day in London whose work could be called first class.

Yet the stage must have producers. Young men ought to go in for producing as a career; but they must not expect to step from the academy into the position, or feel themselves qualified after a year or two's work in a repertory company. Years of hard grind are necessary and a true bent for the work. Amateurs must develop their own producers, though I hardly know how it is going to be done, for it is very nearly a full-time job. The idea that is spreading among amateur companies that they should have amateur producers and not employ professionals is laudable, and shows how ambitious the amateur theatre is becoming. But there are few amateurs who can give the time required to become qualified. Occasionally one comes across a man with a gift for producing: he should be encouraged; but he should know in his own heart how much he has to learn and set about acquiring knowledge. The distinction between amateur and professional is, however, an artificial one and I would like to see it done away with. The only honour the amateur has over the professional is that he does what he does for love: there is no honour in the fact that he knows so much less how to do it.

These points are intended for those working under the conditions that exist on the amateur stage, and I have in mind all who work on that stage, the chief of those conditions being that the work is done in one's spare time.

The first step in production is to choose the play, then follows casting, planning, rehearsing, and finally the performance. The choice of play is the first and most important step. Without the play nothing can be done. How should a play be chosen? There are, in my opinion, four rules: (1) the play must appeal to the producer, (2) it must attract the players, (3) it must be likely to

please the prospective audience, and (4) its production must be practicable.

(1) It is useless for a producer to attempt to do a play that he dislikes or that does not interest him. He must be able to put his whole heart into the production and he cannot do that if he is indifferent. Therefore, if you are a producer, do not undertake to produce a play that does not appeal to you—let someone else do it, for you will not be able to do it justice. If you are a manager or the secretary of a company looking for a producer, make sure that he is really interested in the play you want done. Test him severely. If you are not sure about him don't let him do it; find someone else. Never force a play upon a producer.

(2) The play proposed must attract the players, or they cannot be expected to do it well. Do not let an enthusiast induce a company to start on a play that it doesn't want to do. It is true that people do not always know their own minds in matters of taste—and that must be allowed for. But be very sure before you decide upon a play that the actors will like it—if not at first, then before they have done with it.

(3) The play must be one that you can reasonably expect to please the audience that is to see it. A successful production depends upon the audience as much as upon playwright and actors. The audience completes the play. This does not mean that the audience should be master: far from it. The playwright-actor is his own master, as every artist is, but it is his business to satisfy the audience. The audience employs the playwright-actor and must be served, that is the essential basis for sound art and for a healthy theatre. But the artist serves as an independent man. He has to win his public. He has to get it to want what he wants. He does that by serving it faithfully: rendering it honest, sincere, and fine work. The audience must never be despised nor pandered to. Above all, it must not be forgotten. Many amateurs are inclined to forget their audience and to think only of themselves. That is a fatal mistake.

(4) It must be practicable to perform the play. Even though producer, actors and audience could all be expected to be pleased, there must be a suitable stage, an adequate cast, and sufficient money to make the performance possible. I put these matters last, because they are least; but they cannot be overlooked.

When the play is chosen the next step is to cast it. The wise producer does not allow a play to be chosen without a cast in his mind. There are plenty of good plays that cannot be done because a cast cannot be found—usually the actor to play the leading part. A good play and the right cast means that half the task is done. So cast the play with care. The leading characters come first. See that they balance each other in appearance, voice and manner. Choose the other players in relation to them. Don't cast to type if you can avoid it—I mean do not give anyone a part because he "looks" it, or because he has previously been successful in a similar part. Amateurs often have to do this because their choice of players is restricted, and I do not say that they should not choose players who "fit" the parts required, for they must do the best they can. In principle, however, it is an injustice to the actor to treat him as a type and to cast him (more than once, at any rate) on his face. This applies to amateurs as much as to professionals. In the end, however, you must get the best cast available no matter how you do it, and the producer who knows what he wants will not permit anything to stand in his way.

Notice that I have referred only to the producer in relation to casting. I have not mentioned the committee. No committee can cast a play or should be allowed to do so—that is the producer's proper task. But the committee can advise and help by discovering talent. The wise producer will consult it and will inspire it to work hard to find players for him; but the final decision must rest in his hands.

When the play is cast, the producer has to plan out the production; he should put everything down on paper, and not carry what he intends to do in his head.

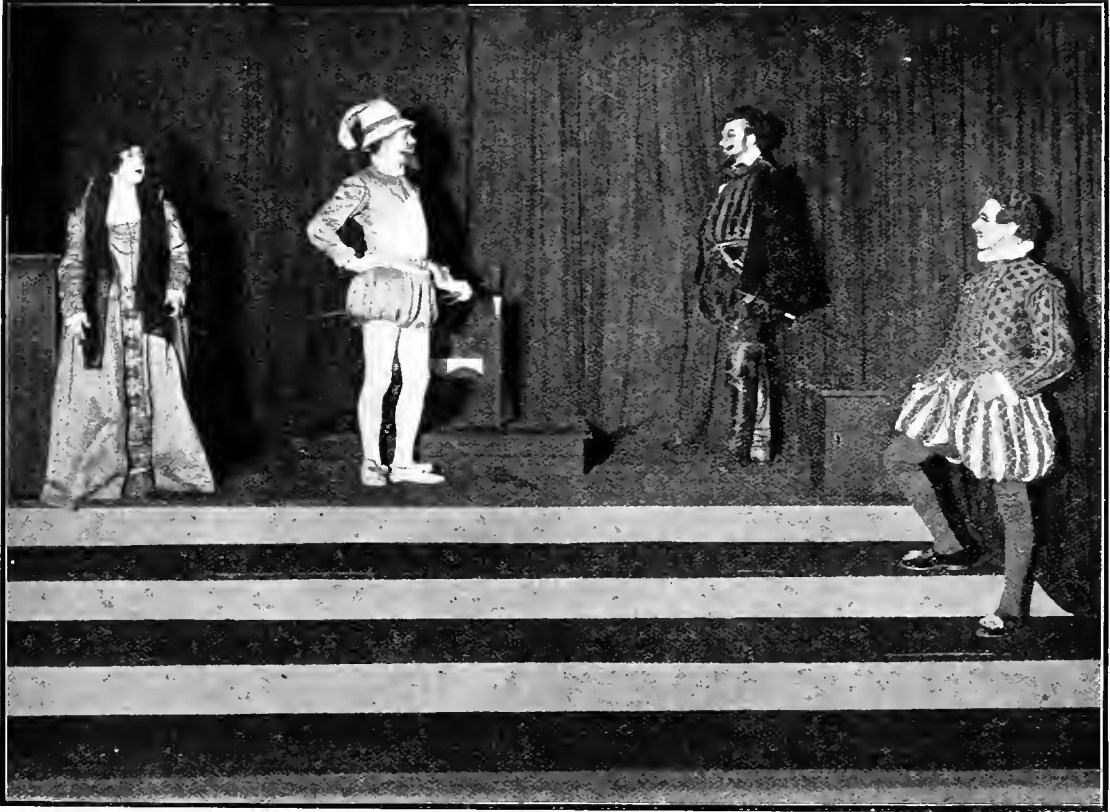
1. Make a detailed study of the play as a whole, of each character, and each scene. Write down the main features of each character and give them to the actor. Study the climax of each scene and the climax of the play. Absorb the play until it moves within your mind and you can re-create it mentally: see and hear it as a perfect thing. Forget every production of the play you have seen and everything you may have read about the play: come to it afresh and strive to get at its secret: why was the play written? what does it do? Digest the play and make it new.

2. Sketch out each scene and act, and make a scene plot, consulting your stage manager and scenic artist.

3. Prepare a property plot, consulting your scenic artist and costume designer.

4. Plan the costumes, consulting your costume designer.

flexible rule: never allow argument to take place at a rehearsal. All argument should cease once the play has been started upon, to be resumed only after the production is finished. At the first reading, arrange when and where rehearsals are to take place. Divide the play up for the convenience of rehearsing—there is no need to start



THE WELWYN GARDEN CITY THEATRE SOCIETY'S PERFORMANCE OF "DON JUAN IN HELL," FROM BERNARD SHAW'S "MAN AND SUPERMAN," PRODUCED BY MR. C. B. PURDOM

5. Prepare a lighting plot, consulting your electrician.

See that your stage manager, scenic artist, costume designer, and electrician, consult together and with you so that they arrive at complete understanding.

After the plan has been prepared start rehearsals. Begin with a reading of the play. Let the players discuss their parts and ask questions: be as explanatory as possible; don't, however, allow a debate to arise. This should be an in-

at the beginning and go steadily through to the end, time after time: take the players where they come together. But let the second rehearsal be a walk through the play, the actors taking their approximate positions on the stage. Then give the actors time to learn their words—a few days; and ask them to come to the next rehearsal with their lines memorized. The real work of production cannot start until the words are known. It will be hard to get this done: but insist upon it at the start. Have the prompter present at the

third rehearsal and induce the players to do without their script.

I suggest at this stage that the producer should impress these points upon the members of the company—

1. To be punctual at rehearsals.
2. To work at their parts at every odd minute

are positions, movement, interpretation, voice, speed, cues, and climax.

When the rehearsals have reached a certain point, build up each scene, each act, and the play as a whole. Get as many full rehearsals as possible on the actual stage you are going to use. Bring the properties into use as early as possible. At



ST. PANCRAS PEOPLE'S THEATRE'S PRODUCTION OF ST. JOHN ERVINE'S "THE LADY OF BELMONT"

they have. The real study of a part is done at home, not at the rehearsals.

3. To remember that they belong to a team, and that each actor depends upon all.

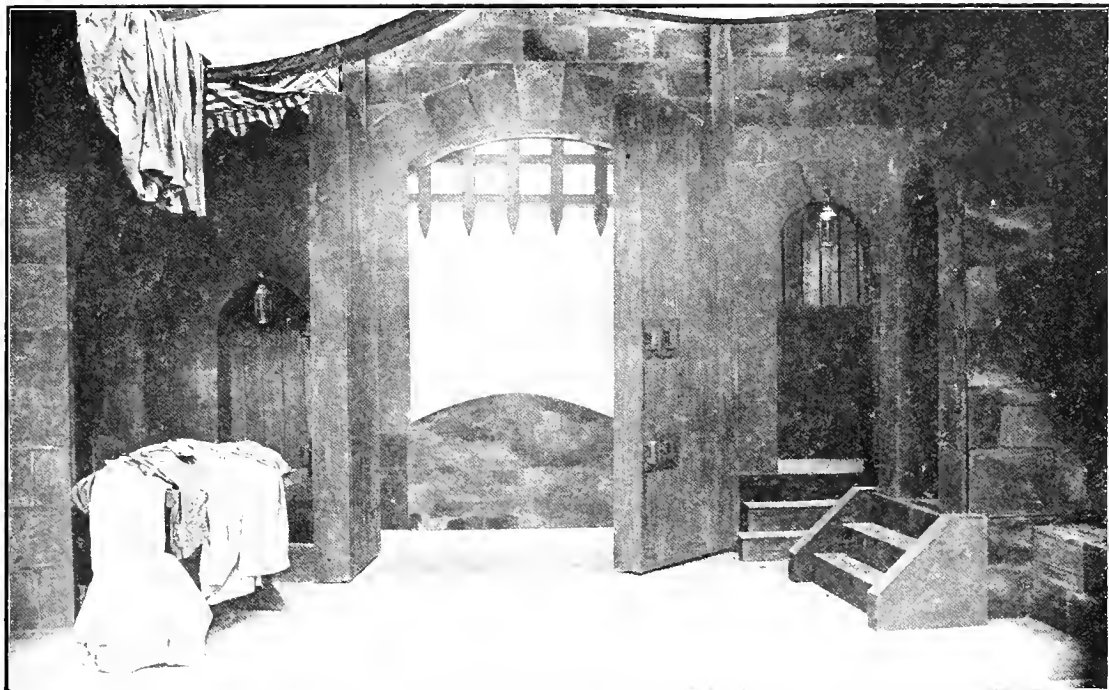
4. Not to be afraid of over-rehearsing. Unless actors know their parts until they are sick of them they will do nothing worth while.

The chief matters to which to pay attention

least a week before the production have the scenery ready, and get the actors used to it. Teach the actors to wait for laughs.

Have scenery, property, and lighting rehearsals before the dress rehearsal.

Everything must be ready before the dress rehearsal. Let the dress rehearsal go through as at a performance; have no changes; do not be in



THE HUDDERSFIELD THESPIANS' SETTING FOR "THE KING'S JEWRY" (HALCOTT GLOVER), MARCH, 1928



THE MARLOWE SOCIETY, CAMBRIDGE, IN SHAKESPEARE'S "KING HENRY IV," PART 2



despair if it goes badly: but be suspicious if it goes too well. Warn the actors not to take the advice of their friends to alter their playing or to vary your instructions after the first performance: let them know that you rely upon their loyalty.

The producer should have control of the play until the run is concluded. If, after the first performance, there is something seriously wrong with the production he should call a rehearsal at once. Not until a play gets before an audience is it possible to tell exactly what its values are. Sometimes an actor goes wrong in his part, or perhaps the emphasis of the whole company is faulty, or the climax is not properly brought out. In any such event a rehearsal must be called. The producer must watch the play during its run and if necessary he must call rehearsals to tighten up anything that has got slack. The audience has an effect upon a play and the actors may be tempted to respond to the audience in such a way that the values of the play are changed. This must be put right.

The authority of the producer should never be disputed, either by actors or anyone else. Success depends upon absolute loyalty to him. The company must work together whole-heartedly under his leadership. That is why the personality of the producer is so important. He must be worthy of loyalty; his company must have implicit confidence in him.

A producer must have the capacity for paying attention to detail. He must observe and prepare for every little thing. The conception of the production as a whole is his; but he must neglect nothing that helps to realize it. Every movement of the actor, every detail of properties, costumes, and make-up must be attended to. A production can easily be ruined by thirty seconds' bad playing or by wrong make-up of a single actor or by

properties or lighting that are unsuitable. Leave nothing to chance.

The position of the producer is one of pains, anxieties, and disappointments. He will never be able to get on the stage the production he has mentally visualized. That is because he is human and is employing human agents. He is imperfect, and so are members of the company. Therefore he must not expect to reach the mark he has set before himself. That does not mean he should not aim high. He should continuously raise his aims and realize that to fail in reaching it is part of the price he must pay for the position he holds.

Finally, let me say that stage production is not an opportunity for producers to give rein to their own idiosyncrasies. The producer owes a loyalty too: he is not there for his own sake, but for the sake of the play. There are clever producers who are concerned only with their own ideas. They should write their own plays and act in them. But when a producer has another dramatist's work in his hands it is his business to be true to it, and put it faithfully on the stage. Play production is not a thing in itself. When we see a play and admire nothing in it but the production, we can be sure that there is something seriously wrong. Production should serve the play—the play should not be an excuse for a producer to perform tricks of stagecraft. That is sometimes done; but it is sterile, and brings the theatre into contempt. To translate the play into the forms of the stage, directing the actors to that end, is all that the producer is required to do.

The application of the general principles outlined in this introductory article will be illustrated in specialist treatment of the production of naturalistic plays, farce, comedy, romantic drama, and tragedy.





## THE ADVANTAGE OF SIMPLE EXTERIORS

By HAL D. STEWART

*Author of "Rizzio's Boots," "The Blind Eye," etc.*

GENERALLY speaking, the exterior scene offers the designer more scope than the interior. It is, on the whole, more difficult to produce a satisfactory exterior, and, therefore, when this is achieved greater satisfaction accrues to the creator.

Fortunately for the amateur, realistic exteriors are rather out of fashion in the artistic theatre. In the days of Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree the

audience was regaled with settings of gardens, woods, and meadows, where everything possible was done to make these exact reproductions of the originals. Backcloths painted in clever perspective, painted wings, borders of network with painted foliage, tree trunks of skilfully contrived bark, mossy banks, and even real rabbits delighted the eyes of the Edwardian audience.

Nowadays this type of exterior is rarely seen,

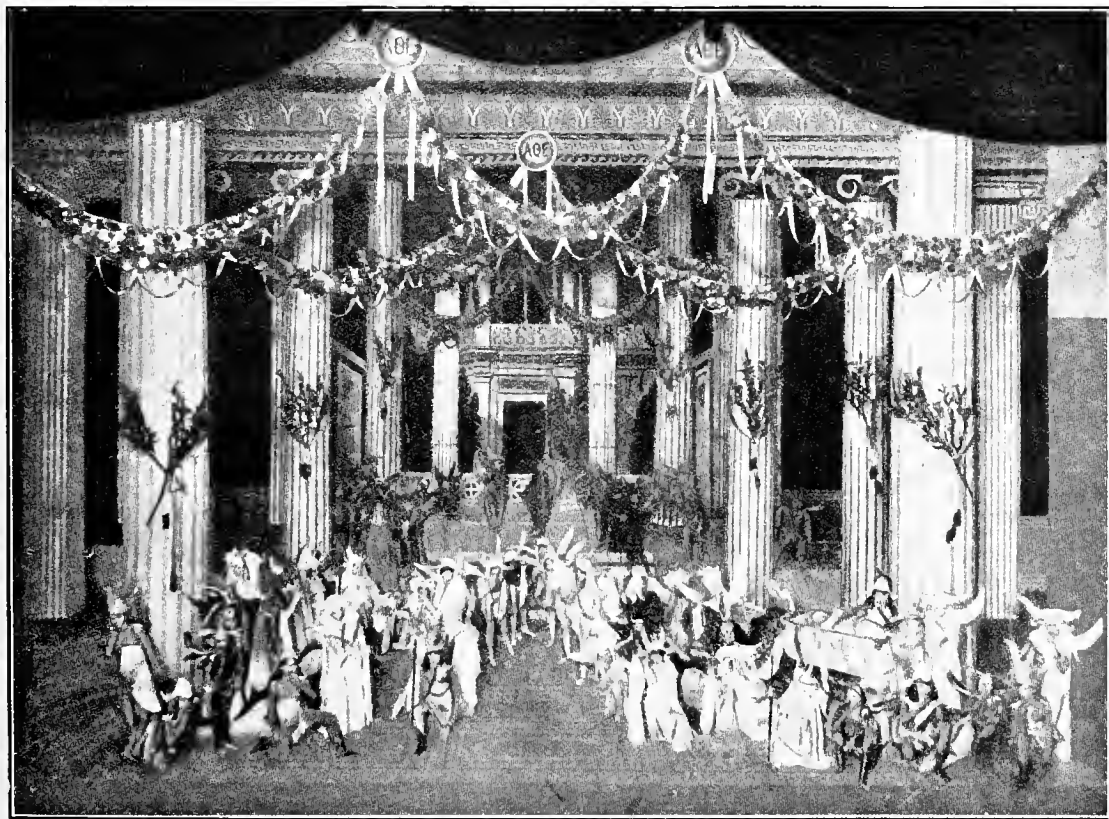


PLATE I

THESEUS'S PALACE IN "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"

SIR HERBERT TREE'S PRODUCTION, 1900

Reproduced by permission from the Gabrielle Enthoven Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

except in musical comedy, and seldom, if ever, in the more artistic type of play in which exterior scenes are common. This may be because the present generation of playgoer, in spite of greater sophistication, uses more imagination in the theatre, and does not insist that every *i* shall be dotted, and every *t* crossed. The cinema has

realistic treatment are not usual in modern plays. The outside scene occurs mostly in plays where the treatment on artistic as opposed to naturalistic lines is the most satisfactory method.

It is fortunate for the amateur that the pendulum has swung in this direction. The modern setting demands study and any amount of

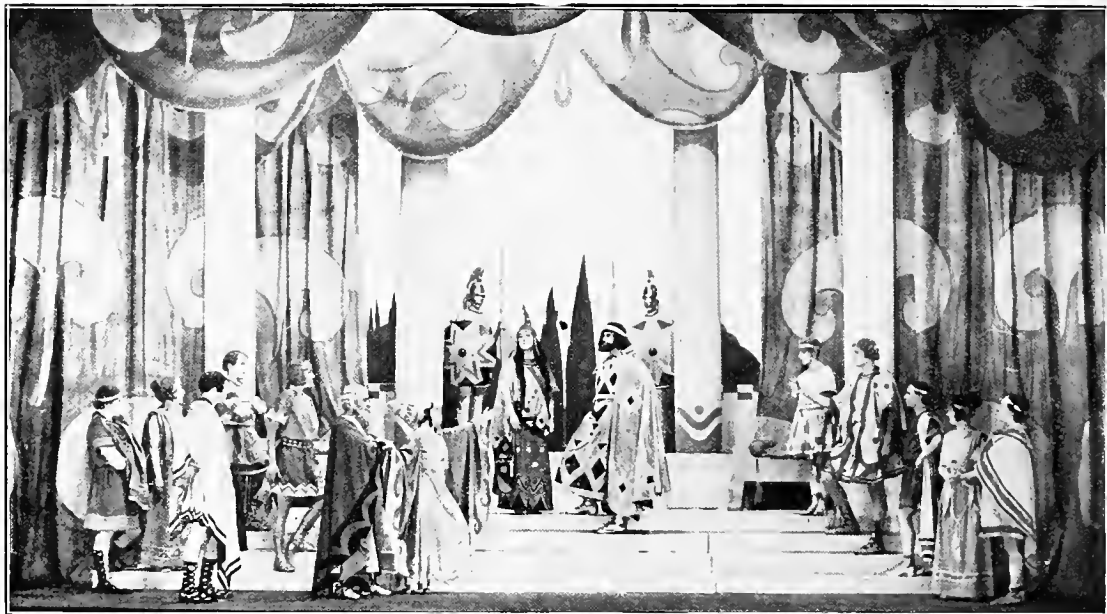


PLATE II

THESEUS'S PALACE IN "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"

LIVERPOOL REPERTORY THEATRE PRODUCTION, 1928

Designed by Philip Gough

taught us to think quickly, and made us a little impatient of too much detail. It has also created an appetite for scenes that are interesting and not merely life-like. Modern cinema photography displays great ingenuity in this respect, but modern stagecraft with an extra dimension at its command can do even more.

The modern type of play lends itself to more artistic treatment, especially where out-of-door scenes are concerned, than the play of pre-War days. Again, the cinema may have, and almost certainly has, something to do with this. The camera can give an exact reproduction of an out-of-door scene—the stage at its best can do no more than produce a clever makeshift. Possibly for that reason, therefore, out-of-door scenes that demand

ingenuity. But ingenuity is not the prerogative of the professional. It does not demand the years of training and inherent talent required to paint elaborate landscape backcloths. The result, too, is more satisfying. The use of perspective in the theatre dates from early times, but it has never been entirely satisfactory. One reason for this is that there is only one point in the auditorium from which true perspective is seen. From all other points there is distortion in a greater or lesser degree. A painted scene, however fine the artistry, remains a painted scene, and does not deceive the audience. Probably the audience is never completely deceived by a setting. By "deceived," I mean, of course, deceived momentarily into accepting the setting as being the actual

scene that it portrays. But there is little doubt that modern methods, which have simplicity as their key-note more nearly achieve this deception than the old-fashioned elaborate methods that depended so greatly on the art of the scene painter.

It is difficult to generalize about stage design. Plays vary greatly, and it follows, therefore, that

time before amateur companies have cycloramas at their disposal.

The next best method is to have the backcloth curved instead of flat. This is often possible, but presents difficulties, as it is essential that the cloth should be without crease or wrinkle. It is by no means easy to get rid of creases, even with a flat



PLATE III

THE WOOD SCENE IN "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"

OSCAR ASCHE'S PRODUCTION, 1905

Reproduced by permission from the Gabrielle Enthoven Collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London

settings also vary. I advise the beginner, however, to avoid painted backcloths, wherever possible, and to use, instead, a plain sky cloth, that is a cloth that is painted a uniform pale blue. The ideal is, of course, a cyclorama. This is a plaster covered dome, which, appropriately lit, gives an astonishing impression of distance that has not so far been achieved by other means. The cyclorama has certain practical disadvantages, but as there are only a few theatres in the country that are equipped with one, it is not worth while discussing its merits and demerits at this stage, for it may be assumed that it will be some considerable

cloth. With a curved cloth, it is more difficult still. On the whole, it is probably more satisfactory to have a flat cloth unwrinkled than a curved cloth that is creased.

The cloth may be masked at the sides by draperies, or by scenery, but the latter should be simple and stylized. In front of the cloth are used stylized trees, hills, bridges, or whatever is necessary for the scene; too little is a great deal better than too much.

This simple stylized scenery must be appropriately lit. An even, glaring light can make the most artistic scenery look absurd. Stage lighting

has made enormous strides, and the designer who can make an intelligent use of lighting has a powerful additional weapon in his armoury. But it is a two-edged weapon, and may wound the man who uses it unskilfully. It is, therefore, essential that the designer should have a working knowledge of stage lighting, and know what

design, he must plead with him to make some modification. If the producer proves adamant, as he sometimes will, then the design must be altered to conform to the lighting that is to be used. The important point is that this must be done *before* work on the scenery or costumes has actually started.

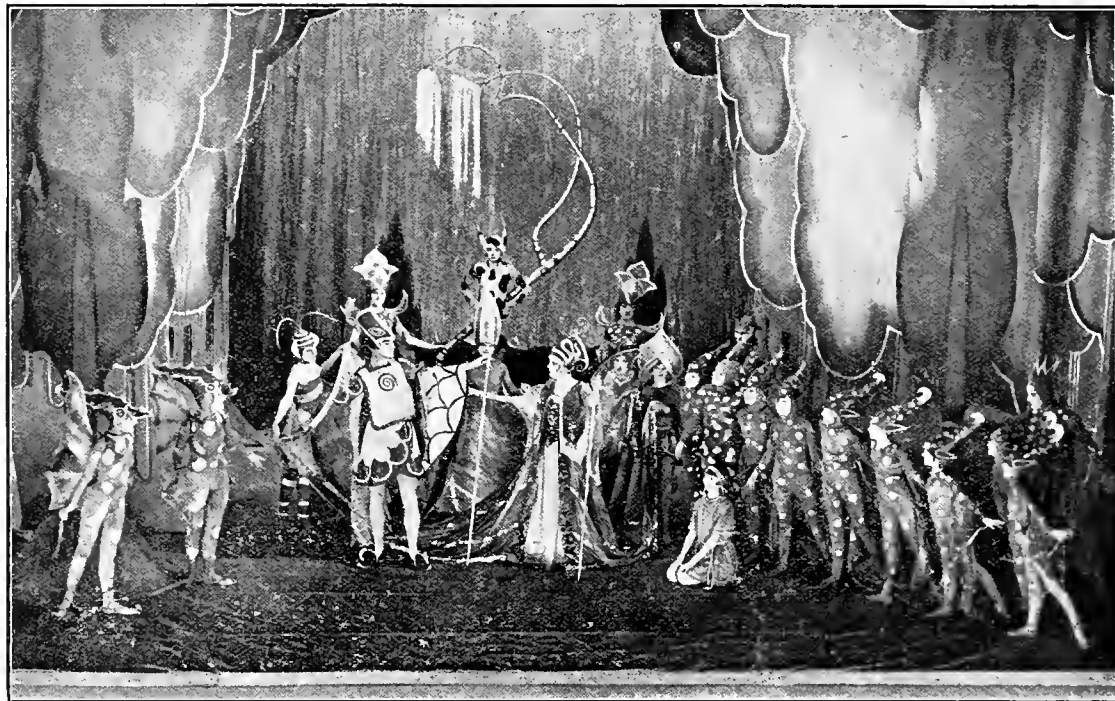


PLATE IV

THE WOOD SCENE IN "A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"

LIVERPOOL REPERTORY THEATRE PRODUCTION, 1928

Designed by Philip Gough

equipment is available for a particular production. In designing both costumes and scenery it is of the utmost importance to bear in mind the effect that the lighting which is to be used will have on the colours that are employed. Coloured light has the effect of altering completely the colour of costumes and scenery. The designer should study the principles of colour mixing. He must ascertain from the producer what lighting he proposes to use, and suggest to him the lighting that he would prefer. If the producer wishes to use colours that are likely to interfere with the general

Any standard book on stage lighting gives information about the changes that coloured materials undergo when they are displayed in a coloured light. A green light, for instance, turns red to black, and a red light turns green to black, green and red being complementary colours. The effects are produced, however, only when the dyes and the coloured media for the lights are pure, and they vary according to the purity.

Apart from the question of colour, the skilful employment of light and shade may in itself make a set interesting.

# BASIC NEEDS

By F. E. DORAN

Secretary, Manchester Playgoers' Club

A PRODUCER should endeavour to realize the value of models, which should always be made to scale and brought into service as early as possible at rehearsals. It is a great help to all concerned if a cast has some idea

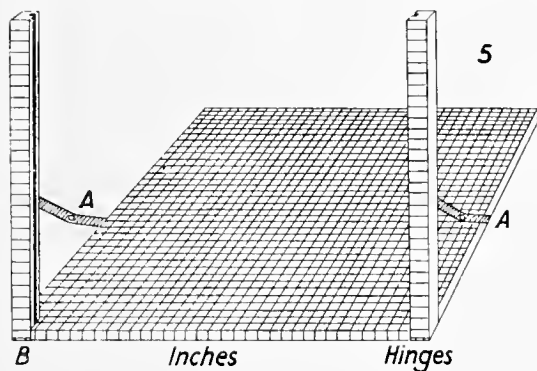


FIG. 1

of the *milieu* in which the action of the play will be presented.

A useful skeleton model for a producer likely to be using various stages of different dimensions can be made as follows: First a flat board, say 3 ft. square, marked off in square inches. This gives a scale of  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. to the foot, or 1 in., as the case requires. Next, two grooved uprights at either side (preferably hinged to the board), also marked off in inches from the bottom or foot-lights end. Into these grooves a piece of black cardboard is inserted to the appropriate depth, and two side pieces for the proscenium sides. Assume that work has to be done on a stage with a proscenium opening of 20 ft. by 14 ft.

The struts *A* are folding hinges in addition to hinges at *B*. The three cardboards *C* 1, 2, and 3 when placed in proper position will give an opening of 20 in. by 14 in., and this when placed on a piece of paper giving the right lines and other data will enable everybody concerned to co-operate with each other in accordance with the producer's plan. Such a model, when used in con-

junction with scale scenery and props, is of the utmost value, when working conditions do not allow of rehearsals on the actual stage of the production. As this is the usual fate of amateur productions I can only add that false and covering positions can be easily avoided when such a model is in use.

The number of amateur shows that proceed gaily without understudies is astonishing, and it is extraordinary how seldom the actual need arises. In many years' experience I have come across not more than a dozen instances, among hundreds of shows, where a player has definitely fallen out and left the promoters frantically tearing hair, scribbling reply-paid telegrams, and/or anxiously 'phoning to that persistently obnoxious wrong number that haunts such crises in the affairs of men.

It is no gospel of perfection to advocate full understudies. In spite of the practical experience above (i.e. that societies without understudies have always managed to pull through), there is the great advantage of security, and when a player is late at rehearsal, or absent through grave

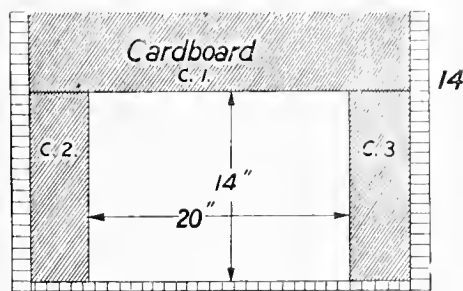


FIG. 2

cause, an understudy is useful as a peg on which to hang necessary work with other people in the cast. There is a feeling that understudying a part is a sort of second-hand casting, a sop to the backward, and one way of disposing of the body of a successful ticket seller with a small part. It should be freed from any stigma of that kind and looked

at rationally. A second string to all essential parts is a common-sense necessity. It gives a beginner a chance to make good. Small part people have an incentive to study the bigger part for which they are understudies. I know it is a dangerous doctrine to adumbrate, but I see no harm in asking stars to play small parts from time to time and to understudy. This evolves and encourages the team idea, which is a great stimulant to good, even working. The adoption and practice of this policy would require the greatest tact on the part of the producer, and I regret that tact is not one of my subjects. Nevertheless, I would emphasize that a producer who rejects the use of understudies is neglecting a useful weapon, and is asking for trouble of the first magnitude.

A producer will instil into his cast, particularly the beginners, the importance of good make-up. It is astonishing how few amateurs can do their own make-up, and how few producers can tell the earnest inquirer how to achieve what is wanted. Usually it is left to a hired professional, who works to types. "Dark lady—elderly," or "Young lady, fair, heroine," says he, and accordingly produces a type of dark lady—elderly, or young lady, fair, heroine, which fits the subtleties of the part as aptly as a wanted-by-the-police description. Make-up is simple enough and when properly understood can be of immense help to an actor in building up a character.

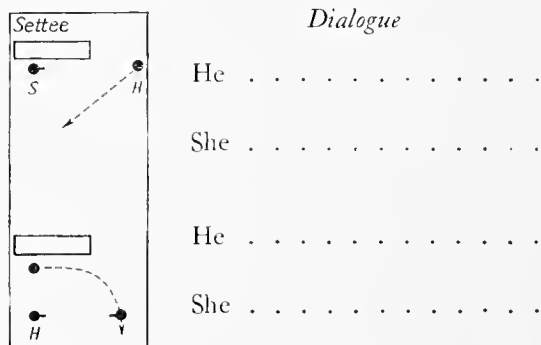
The same arguments of internal significance apply to costumes and the use of them as to words and make-up. A little thought and examination will evolve ideas for colour and texture of materials that will harmonize with the character. A producer working to the modern spirit cannot neglect this aspect of his work, and he will find that a knowledge of new colours and materials is of the greatest value. Anybody who has seen Sargent's portrait of Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth will realize how the long plaits of red hair and the green vesture help along the characterization. This also applies to the designs of the late Charles Ricketts for Shaw's *St. Joan*; in particular, the costume for the Earl of Warwick. Another example from present-day practice is the use of Lancaster cloth (sometimes, but erroneously, described as American leather) for Expressionistic Drama, the hard, shining surfaces just fitting in with the chromium-steel wit and satire of such

plays. Silks, velvets, cottons, wools, all offer different textures for varying moods.

Involved in all the foregoing is the question of prompting, and again, as with understudying, I approach the matter entirely from the aspect of a sense of security and efficiency. Prompting can be good or bad, as any one with working experience knows. A good prompter is a jewel, and should be treasured as such. The fact that a good cast should not require a prompter no more invalidates the argument than the fact that a sure-fire principal does not need an understudy. Too, too often the prompter is any odd person who has nothing else to do, and who is expected to act in desperation if a speaker dries up, but if *the* prompter is brought into the scheme properly, he or she becomes the producer's left hand as a good stage manager is his right.

I am afraid that the right use of the prompt copy is a craft not properly grasped by those to whom it can be of most use. It is what its name implies, a *prompting* or reminding copy, and is a record of the words, movements, lighting, properties, noises off, and all the incidentals of the play. Too often is it regarded as the instrument by which a lagging memory may be jolted into action, but its use goes far beyond that.

A wise producer will catch his prompter early, in fact the first thing, and will mark into the prompt copy every position and movement decided upon. A good way is to mark in symbols, thus—



This, or any other symbol method, saves a lot of space in the margin of a printed book. Large dots can represent crowds or groups of various sizes. Colours can be used for individuals. Each act and scene should have its lighting plot clearly described,



a full list of stage "props," and a list of hand "props," with the names of the characters that will use them. If a character has to use many "props" it is better to arrange—

Act 1	Act 2
Lord Charles—Riding whip	Bundle letters
Telegram	Small box
Notebook	Notebook
Fishing rods	Bunch keys

rather than a list—

Lord Charles. Whip, Telegram, Notebook, etc.

A wardrobe list should also be incorporated, so that a full record of each character's costume is kept.

When typescript copies are in use they will be typed on one side of the paper only. The blank side can be used for the details above, and clearly marked with the warnings to call a character some minutes before the cue. If the book is printed it is necessary to have two copies, to separate the leaves, and to paste in a dummy book if this process is to be employed. When books are scarce, the marginal method is efficient and economical.

When the details of the prompt book have been filled in, it should be given to the prompter, who should be someone definitely appointed to the job, and not any person who is present at rehearsals or during the show. The prompter should act as a sort of producer's secretary, taking down his directions to the cast, making notes, and ultimately checking the cast, through the producer, when things are not going on according to Cocker. If the prompter attends rehearsals and studies the players, he or she will soon know when a player is deliberately pausing or has really forgotten. Nothing will put a player out of stride so much as an unwanted prompt. It is almost as bad as the wanted prompt that never comes.

The prompter should have a good voice, clear pronunciation, and the confidence of the players. A prompter who is negligent gets the cast on edge, and if there is the slightest feeling that the prompter is not following the script and prepared to prompt at any second the tone of the show will drop several degrees. I remember an incident of a prompter with a typescript that had been altered and re-altered until it was almost illegible with back references, cuts, and re-insertions. Blue crayon over red, lead pencil, ink, written and

typed additions and deletions made each page a regular jazz pattern. One night the prompter (a professional actress) was so absorbed in the play that she forgot to turn over, the result being that my Lord of Leicester, in Schiller's *Mary Stuart*, recited impromptu blank verse of preposterous content that must have made Schiller turn in his grave. Not only had the prompter lost the page, but, owing to the markings, she could not find out whether to turn forward or back.

The rehearsals should be attended by the prompter. This is important. Some prompters are too ready to butt in, and the job requires tact and understanding.

#### COLOUR TONES

One of the most important elements the producer must control is colour. Colours cause emotional reactions, and the atmosphere of a play can be established as soon as the curtain rises by attention to this valuable weapon in the armoury. Those who saw Komisarjevsky's production of Tchekov's *Three Sisters* at the Fortune Theatre in 1928 or '9 will recall that the prevailing colour tone was a sort of Corot grey, a colour tone that immediately established a mood in the mind of the audience.

A producer can just as easily, though perhaps not so readily, spoil the author's intention by a wrong colour scheme as by bad acting, and before he goes far in his work of rehearsal, he should have made up his mind on two points, (1) the author's intention, and (2) the colour or mood of his production. This must not be confused with the "period" or style of a setting. I am dealing exclusively with the psychological aspect and how a producer can penetrate the emotional inertia of the most hidebound audience if he appeals to all their senses in the right way.

Take a Noel Coward comedy, say *Private Lives*. I visualize this as set in chromium steel, grey velvet, a touch of black, scarlet flowers; mirrors with steel frames; the minimum of furniture, everything modernist design and functional. The same author's *Post Mortem* I visualize as much less hard, though it is a play with more lash to its whip. Wealth, comfort, power, and betrayal are the strings of this instrument, and the author's purpose evolves as the play proceeds. *En passant*, the producer of the transpontine

drama had hold of this principle, but dealt with it in a simpler and cruder form by relying on "incidental music" and for what they were some of these "incidentals" were excellent for their purpose. Struggle music, tear music, pursuit music, all employed the aid of the musician, and a try-out of a selection of these pieces by a modern producer who despises incidental aids as adventitious is a challenge to produce the same effect by the more subtle means of colour.

Having established the mood colour of the scenery or setting, the producer will now think over the individuals in relation to the author's intention, their place (as working parts) in the play, and their relation to the framework in which they appear, i.e. the setting and the rest of the cast. The colour scheme of each costume must harmonize and have a definite relation to the individual performance. I can do no more than mention this important part of a producer's duty, as here it is almost impossible to extend the rule to example, but here again I may recall that the melodramatic producers had hold of the idea, when the villainess always appeared in scarlet sequins. This point of colour in costume must not be confused with the detail of "character" parts, and there are times when a setting might have to be designed "to" a costume, as, for instance, a certain uniform that has to be worn, and does not allow of departure from standard fact. Those who saw some of the Cochran revues will realize the point I am aiming at when I recall the black and white Highlander of Massine in *Wake Up and Dream*, the Hungarian wedding in an earlier revue, and the Boccaccio episode in another. In these instances, some from among many, all the senses of the audience were approached, and the cumulative effect was sweeping.

Having created the scenic mood, heightened or intensified by the costumes of the principals, the moving background must be dealt with. The

crowd and supers must be considered in exactly the same way, i.e. part of the whole scheme. Whether the colour scheme of the crowd and supers should be in contrast or in harmony the producer must decide for himself, but always in accordance with the integrity of the "author's intention."

The producer, having got so far, must then consider his lighting plot. In this section *shadow* must also be considered as part of lighting. When designing scenery and costumes always work to the effect in *artificial* light. Gas, electric, and lime light have varying effects on colour, as every woman knows, and certain lighting effects will kill certain colours. The principles here are so obvious and can be tested so simply that to enumerate examples would be a waste of space. But I might mention my testing "box" apparatus. Any large box will do. I used a Tate & Lyle sugar box about 2 ft. 6 in. square, blacken the interior, and fix an electric lampholder inside. When materials are submitted for approval of colour, or tests for colour effects are required, the desired lamp can be fitted in and the subject tested out.

A testing box will teach a producer more than I can hope to write: the effect of light on the same colour but in different material, the depth of shade, the overbearing weight of one colour (light) on another—red will kill any other colour—colour groups, i.e. effect of 2 yellow to 1 red, and so on. These experiments, though on a small scale, give a producer invaluable information that can be readily enlarged into a part of the whole seen by the audience.

I have endeavoured to relate the "elements of the play" over which the producer has direct and personal control, what we might call the inanimate elements. Having grasped the essential importance of these, I propose to start building up on the human side, and in due course to bring both together in the unity of the play.



## THE NORMANS

By NEVIL TRUMAN

*Hon. Secretary, Nottingham Playgoers' Club*

OWING to the perpetual battles that William the Conqueror and his successors had to undertake in order to subdue a country that did not welcome the Normans, there was little change in dress during the Norman period. Men's minds being upon war were not inclined to waste time in designing costumes, and of what use was it for the ladies to think of something fresh when their lords were almost always on service?

Clothes were lined and adorned with fur—ermine, squirrel, marten, goat, and rabbit being favourites.

### DRESS (William I)

The men seem to have taken over the ways of the women in the matter of the length of their tunic sleeves, for the outer tunic now has short sleeves, and the inner one, long sleeves. Both were knee length and embroidered.

The *Outer Tunic* (men) had short wide sleeves of elbow length, with embroidered edges. The *Inner Tunic* (men) was of white, with long wrinkled sleeves projecting over the hand if extended. This white tunic shows round the neck, where the wider opening of the outer tunic was V-shaped. This close neck hole was bordered with embroidery or it might be V-shaped, about five inches deep. It was either belted or closely fitted the knees, and, if the latter, had slits at either side to allow free movement. The *Mantle* was a knee-length cape, rectangular or semi-circular, fastened on the right shoulder or in the front. It was like the Saxon mantle, except that it was slightly larger, and was kept together with a brooch. The women dressed like the Saxon women and the Norman men, in two tunics (the kirtle and the gunna), now called the chemise and the gown. The *Chemise* was of white linen, with a long skirt and long wrinkled sleeves.

The *Gown* had a loose elbow-length sleeve and a skirt of three-quarter length and often even longer.

### DRESS (William II)

The men's tunic sleeves became so long that they were turned back over the wrists.

The women's tunics were laced up the back so as to make the front fit smoothly to the figure.

*Cloaks* (women) were lined with fur, and hung from the shoulders by straps across the bosom.

### DRESS (1100-1150)

The *Bliand* (women) was a long smock-like gown with a laced bodice of elastic fabric. The



NORMAN NOBLE

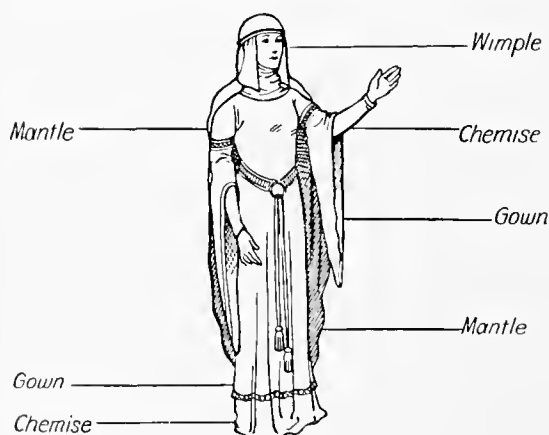
skirt was full and straight, and was bound by a wide belt. *Girdles* were either a wide strip of cloth richly embroidered or a long silken rope wound round the waist, with tasselled ends, which hung in front almost down to the hem of the gown. The pendulous cuff increased so much that the sleeve had to be knotted on itself to prevent it trailing on the ground. Clothes became longer.

### LEGS

*Chausses* (men) were trousers of wool, tight to the ankle. The legs were wound to the knee with strips of leather or cloth, which was sometimes banded at the knee and/or the ankle. Linen breeches, like pyjamas, were fastened with a running string at the hem.

There is much confusion in costume books between breeches and chausses. Breeches, no matter what their length, were always hung from the waist downwards, being fastened by a running string. They were close fitting, or loose, according to taste, and if loose were brought close to the leg by cross strapping from the knee to the ankle. The length varied from what were our modern "shorts" to ankle length. Shorts were loose enough to enable them to be caught up at the sides of the thighs and pinned to the upper waist line part.

Chausses were stockings and were drawn from the foot upwards, and this distinction between the



NORMAN LADY

two garments should make clear the different cut and use of the two. The hose gradually became longer and more closely fitting and were very wide at the thigh so that the breeches could be tucked into them. Old drawings show that these stockings were tied to the waist string of the breeches in front by a tape. Again, some drawings show that even when the "shorts" variety was adopted they could be gathered in at the knee to prevent draughts blowing upwards.

#### FEET

*Shoes* (men) were of black leather with narrow bands of embroidery along the top and down the instep. Red, yellow, blue, and green shoes were also used, and their tops rolled over to the ankle. In William II's day (1087-1100) the shoes became pointed, and were stuffed with wool at

the point. In the reign of Stephen (1134-54) the tops of the shoes went much higher, and were rolled back so as to show the brilliant lining. Stockings, which became common about 1100, were made of say, which was a kind of worsted cloth.

#### HAIR

*Hair* (men) was during the reign of William I short, and clean shaven faces were *de rigueur*, but this custom only lasted a short time and the nation went back to the pre-Conquest customs of longer hair. By William II's time the hair and beard were worn quite long again.

*Hair* (women) was simply coiled at the back of the head, and in curls about the face. It was still hidden by the head-rail (now called a wimple). By Henry I's time (1100-35) the hair was no longer hidden, and long braids which were intertwined with coloured ribbons became fashionable. The ends might be bound with strips of silk instead, and about 1135 the wimple went out.

#### HATS

The *Hood* (men) was warm, and of cloth, but tight *Caps* of cloth were also worn. These were brimless or were peaked in the centre of the crown (the "Gnome" variety again).

The *Wimple* (women) was the Saxon head-rail. It was a square of material, generally white, which was wound round the head and throat. Some women preferred to expose the hair even in early Norman times, and this became normal in Henry I's time, when the wimple went out, about 1135.

Down to the end of the fourteenth century it was the common custom to be bareheaded—a healthy practice which has come again into fashion in our own times. Hoods were worn mainly when travelling and in inclement weather. The same applies to the wimple and it is not entirely necessary to provide headgear in order to be accurate. Hoods and wimples appear and reappear right down the centuries in varying forms and have lasted right down to the present day in academic and monastic dress. Conversely, it will be observed, as this treatise progresses, how in later centuries—the seventeenth and eighteenth—the reverse principle was adopted and instead of men and women going bareheaded out of doors,

they actually wore their hats indoors as well as outside.

#### PEASANTS

For the peasants, canvas and fustian were popular. As in all ages, the peasants disregarded the extremes of fashion when they were exaggerated in cut. This is only to be expected; firstly, because they had not the money to spend on the latest fashions, and, secondly, because such exaggerations nearly always got in the way during work, and only the rich, who had little manual work to perform, could tolerate such clothes. This refers specially to the points appended to clothes and shoes, and to the extreme length of dresses.

Hats and caps were of felt. Trousers were loose.

#### GENERAL

Costume in Norman times was in the main quite simple for all classes. The rich imported fabrics, and adorned the native English woollens with needlework, pearls, and other precious stones, a fashion that followed the more advanced culture across the Channel. It should be borne in mind, however much we are inclined to resent the Norman invasion, that Norman culture and Norman learning were definitely in advance of the Saxon, and though the Conqueror's methods were stern, he and his descendants introduced many benefits in government and living.

In stage work this distinction between the cultured Norman and the less polished Saxon can be made with advantage.

The Crusades had a reflex effect in the introduction, by the returning warriors, of Eastern fabrics and decorations, and the lengthening of dresses, which became voluminous, like those of the East.

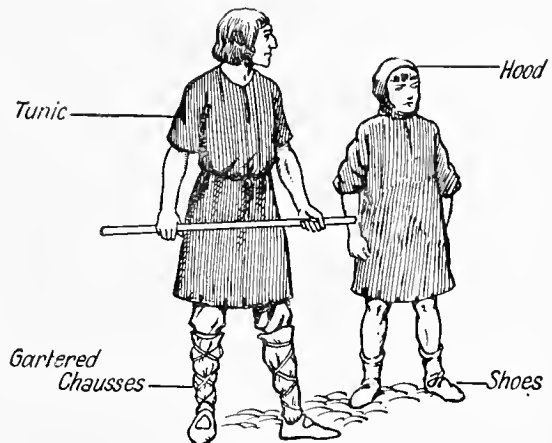
The Girdle comes into great prominence during the first half of the twelfth century, and may be said to be a distinguishing mark of this period. Mittens were in use. The wimple is sometimes known as the *couvre-chef*. The favourite colours of early Norman times were red, blue, and green.

With the advent of the long sleeves, which touched the ground, men found a way out of the difficulty of being unable to use their hands by making a slit in the sleeve at the place where the

opening ought to be, that is, at the elbow, through which the arm was put, the rest of the sleeve hanging down. This interesting relic still remains in the academic gowns of masters in our universities.

When braids came into fashion, those women who were not well favoured by Nature did not shrink from using artificial plaits for the purpose.

*Macbeth* is sometimes costumed in early Norman style, though that usually adopted is a kind of legendary British and Saxon combined. Its



NORMAN PEASANTS

main features are described in the chapter on the Saxons, but for the braided hair, and the long sweeping sleeves customary for Lady Macbeth and her womenfolk, the Norman dresses are sufficiently accurate. Indeed, there was at first little change between the Saxon and the Conqueror's fashions.

In fashioning the ample cloaks to the shoulders large circular brooches or rings should be used. These give scope for fine decorative touches.

Deep borders of ornament on the tunics were embroidered, woven or appliqué at the neck, wrists, and hem, and sometimes there was also a band of decoration round the upper arm.

#### MEN

##### *Dress*

Outer tunic with short sleeves.

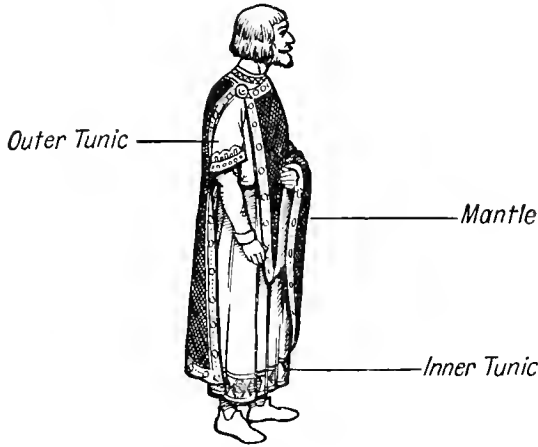
Inner tunic with long sleeves.

Mantle, fastened on shoulder.

Belt.

*Legs*

Chausses—wool trousers.  
Leather or cloth bandages.



NORMAN NOBLE

*Feet*

Leather shoes, black or coloured and embroidered.  
Later they have high rolled tops.

*Hair*

William I—clean shaven.  
William II—long hair and beard.

*Hats*

Hood—gnome-like.  
Cap—peaked in centre, brimless.

## WOMEN

*Dress*

Chemise—long skirt and sleeves, white linen	} William I
Gown—elbow sleeves	
Cloaks—fur lined, straps on shoulders	} William II
Bliaud—a smock-gown, laced	
Girdles	} 1100-1150
Long knotted sleeves to gowns	

*Hair*

Coiled at back, curls in front—hidden by wimple (William I and II).  
Long braids (1100-1150).

*Hats*

Wimple till 1135 round head and throat.

## PEASANTS

*Dress*

Fustian or canvas.  
Hats and caps of felt.  
Loose trousers.

# ALTERATION OF THE FEATURES

By ALFRED HARTOP

*Perruquier and Lecturer to Amateur Societies*

*"There are shades in all good pictures, but there are lights too, if we choose to contemplate them."*

—DICKENS, *Nicholas Nickleby*.

COMPOUND foundations are serviceable to women. Girls will not improve upon single colour foundation, except for the express purpose of adding a few years to their appearance. For young women No. 5 as a base is slightly too yellow, and should be lightened by mixing with No. 1½ in about equal proportions. The two should be thoroughly mixed before application on the face to produce a creamy tint, and considered as a single base tint over which No. 3 or No. 9 is faintly distributed until the desired tone of complexion is reached; at the same time the scumbled effect should be maintained. Women of middle-age may use No. 5 as a base, and follow with No. 3½ or No. 9 in judicious quantity. The foundation completed, carmine is added to the cheeks, the eyes are coloured, and the make-up is completed and powdered in the usual way. Finally, to tone up the complete make-up, take the dry rouge, and with a hare's foot or small puff give the cheeks a fresh bloom, softening any sharp contrast between foundation and the deeper colour, and toning down any undue paleness about the chin, jaws, or forehead. Always remember that dry rouge must be applied after powdering, and never directly on to grease paint.

Thus far the make-up has proceeded on straightforward lines without making allowance for the special aspect of stage illusion. It should be borne in mind that make-up is the creation of an illusion; that is to say, the natural features and shadows that are obliterated by artificial light must be revived by exaggerating the lines of the features and reproducing the shadows, so that the face will present a natural appearance to the audience. To accomplish this a definite understanding must be arrived at as to how shadows are formed and where they fall, in which connexion important factors are the predominating direction of the light that reaches the face and

the distance from which the make-up will be viewed.

The face owes its chief characteristics to its irregularities, which consist of projections and hollows, elevations and depressions, dimples, wrinkles, etc. Imagine, for example, what the effect upon the face would be with a stage illuminated solely by overhead batten lights, which would give a light similar to daylight. Such prominences as the forehead, the ridge of the nose, the cheek bones, the lower lip, and the point of the chin, would first intercept and reflect the vertically falling light, thus producing high lights (the term is used in the sense of implying intense or prominent lights). Hollows or depressions would appear as shaded areas of varying degrees according to the amount of light reaching them; and dimples and wrinkles would appear as high lights separated by graduated shadows.

Under these conditions definite downward shadows would be cast by the main projections of the face, namely, the brows, nose, and chin, which would fall on the eyelids, the upper lip, and the neck. Viewed from the front the light and shade resulting from downward lighting would appear normal, because they present a scheme with which the audience is familiar. If, on the other hand, the direction of the lighting was changed to upward, as in the case of footlights only, the entire scheme of light and shade would be reversed, and would, therefore, present an unfamiliar and distorted aspect of the face, since upward light is never present in real life. Upward light, from footlights, creates false high lights on prominences of the face—under the chin, the tips of the ears and nose, and under the eyebrows, thereby eliminating from these positions the shadows that are cast by daylight or downward light.

Generally, it will be found that on amateur stages the lighting consists of a combination of

overhead batten lights and footlights, with, probably, a preponderance of footlights, so that it may be assumed that in most cases the strongest light is thrown in an upward direction. Further, the relative position of a person on the stage to the two sources of light needs to be taken into account, for near stage centre the amount of light that reaches the face from each source will be about equal, but as the footlights are approached their effective strength becomes greater, and the amount of top light is reduced. This loss of light balance is explained by the fact that in moving closer to the footlights the face is brought nearer to the source of upward light without being any appreciable distance nearer the source of downward light—because of its height.

With these ideas in mind it is not difficult to ascertain the direction from which the lighting is strongest, and then by appropriate light and shade in the make-up, to tone down false high lights, to fade out false shadows, and, at the same time, to reinstate high lights and shadows on a natural, familiar basis.

Shadows are almost invariably of a similar colour, only darker, to the rest of the face. As they are the result of obstructed light they appear as a darkened area, and are best represented in make-up by a tone somewhat darker than the foundation. Selecting from the colours in hand, this toning down of false high lights and the representation of shadows may be done with No. 9, lake, or light grey, on a pale foundation; or lake, grey, or brown, on a florid foundation. Natural indentations of the chin, the upper lip, and the hollows of the eyes are reproduced in a similar way. Conversely, the strengthening of the features is necessary. Emphasis may be given to the brows, the nose, and chin: the lips may be made more shapely, and the eyes more natural, by high lights of a tone that is lighter than the foundation. No. 1½ should be employed for high-lighting a pale foundation: No. 2½ or 3 on a No. 9/5 or similar compound foundation.

From the foregoing explanation of the formation of high lights and shadows it should be easy to realize the possibilities that a knowledge of light and shade opens out in creating the illusion of altered features. By skilful adaptation of light and shade it is possible to alter the natural appearance of a face to a considerable extent. Applied in the

simplest form, light and shade may be employed to correct or improve the features, to change the expression, and to give the appearance of increased age; in fact, it may rightly be said to form the basis of all facial characterization. The alteration of features for the purpose of improving their appearance, or to delineate characteristics or peculiarities not possessed naturally, may be regarded as a first departure from the simple "straight" make-up and a step in the direction of "character" work. Therefore, the following hints on light and shade effects should be carefully noted, though they by no means exhaust the possibilities of this important phase of make-up.

#### NOTES ON THE ALTERATION OF FEATURES

There are natural characteristics peculiar to a fair face that make a dark make-up unsuitable to it, and vice versa. Consequently, in "straight" parts do not take too many liberties; make up for your type. Obviously, grease paint alone cannot remodel the features; it can only create the illusion of an altered appearance, which, however effective when viewed from the front, is rarely so when the head is turned and the face is seen in profile.

Briefly analysed, the general proportions of a face are approximately equal distances between the hair line and eyebrows; the eyebrows and the nostrils; the nostrils and the tip of the chin. Any definite divergence from this standard will offer ground to work upon. Consider, firstly, the extended effects that may be obtained: the breadth, depth, or angle of any of the facial proportions may be changed by painting a narrow or receding portion lighter, or shading a too broad or prominent portion darker. When a compound foundation is used these changes are made possible by graduating the blending of the colours so as to produce the desired light and shade before the more positive high lights are applied. The forehead, for example, is made to appear broader by applying lighter foundation colour about and above the temples, or made to lose breadth by shading the temples and carrying the shading upwards. The depth may be increased by brushing the hair well back and blending a lighter shade with the foundation close to the hair line or decreased by shading the hair line a little darker and brushing the hair lower down the forehead. The



FIG. 11

angle of the forehead may be affected by shadowing the upper part so as to give a receding appearance, which is further accentuated by lighting the parts immediately above the eyebrows; and local bulges are brought out by appropriately placed highlights. A forehead that recedes sharply may be corrected by lighting the receding part, but this effect is somewhat limited by the fact that the upper part of the forehead is a prominence that catches an amount of top light and appears ludicrous if it is too high-lighted. With youthful types it is always advisable to keep the forehead a tone lighter than other parts of the face, as this gives a suggestion of animation to the countenance.

THE NOSE may be lengthened by blending a high-light of No. 1½ or No. 5 the entire length of the ridge from the bridge down to the tip (Fig. 11A); or a more moderate length may be suggested by a somewhat shorter high-light. If this high-light is supported by shading the sides of the nose darker, the effect is greatly intensified by making

the nose appear thinner. Similar treatment can be applied where the nose is too thick. A nose that is too long or inclined to dip down should be shaded at the tip with No. 9 or lake, as shown in Fig. 11B.

Fig. 11C shows how to increase the general size and prominence of a small nose by shading the cheeks near the nose and high-lighting the wings only, the remainder of the nose being of the foundation tint.

The effect of a Roman type of nose is given by shading the depression between the eyes to give greater depth and high-lighting the ridge to give extra prominence. To alter a high-bridged nose, shade the prominent part and leave it devoid of any high-light. A crooked nose may be made straight by applying a straight high-light down the ridge and at the hollow side, subduing the conspicuous side by a supporting shadow. A crooked nose is made by a bent line of high-light on the ridge with corresponding shadows at the sides.

If the tip of the nose turns upward, shade underneath and place a strong



FIG. 12

high-light, extending upward about one-third the length of the nose above the tip. This applied to a normal nose would make the tip appear to droop over the lip (Fig. 11D). To make a snub nose shade the ridge nearly to the tip and place a high-light just above the normal tip.

CHEEKS that are inclined to be hollow are filled out by blending a light foundation in the required area, and then by using a somewhat pale shade of rouge, which should be concentrated on the fuller parts. Increased width is given to a thin face by lightening the foundation at the sides. If the cheeks are too full, a soft shading of No. 9, or No. 9 toned a little darker with grey or brown, may be blended under the cheek bones; but it is always advisable to study the effect of shading in this position, as if it is overdone the attempted deception will be obvious. A dimple in the cheek may be suggested by a thin shadow between two small high-lights.

LIPS offer considerable scope for conveying impressions of character traits. The expression of the mouth can be altered to meet special requirements. For instance, an upward slope of the corners lends a more charming and amiable expression; a downward slope produces the opposite or a dejected expression. Small dimples of shading at the mouth corners, supported by small high-lights on the outside, express a smiling mouth.

A receding upper lip can be made to appear more prominent by running a high-light along its edge from corner to corner and then by applying the lip stick heavily beneath it. If the extreme effect is not required, the high-light may be placed so as to emphasize the cupid's bow curves and faded out half-way toward the mouth corners. If the upper lip is wide and flat the vertical indentation in the centre should be shaded with No. 9 with a central line of lake to give depth. The border of the indent is then defined

by a vertical line of high light at each side from beneath the nose to the lip edge.

The lower lip can be made to appear more prominent by running a high-light upon its edge to the desired degree.

THE CHIN, if receding, may be brought forward by blending a high-light graduated so that its lightest spot suggests the point of the chin, which may be further emphasized by a shading of No. 9 or rouge immediately below and under the chin, and by another shading mid-way between the chin and the mouth (Fig. 11E). Conversely, to correct a prominent or long chin, or to produce the effect of a receding chin, the most prominent part is shaded and the surrounding parts are toned lighter (Fig. 12A).

Prominence is given to the angle of the JAW-BONE by high-lighting at the point of the bone, just below the ear, and shading beneath it, as shown in Fig. 12B. If this angle is too large, put a shading on the point and a high-light to suggest the reduced angle.

CHEEK BONES that are prominent may be made less so by shadowing the point of the bone and toning up the area immediately below (Fig. 12C). Along these lines the width of the face may be varied by high-lighting the cheek bone in different relation to the nose and shadowing the outer parts (Fig. 12D).

EYES that are too deeply set may be improved by careful high-lighting. Using a shade somewhat lighter than the foundation, lighten the outer half of each eye immediately under the eyebrows, and then run a line of the same shade along the full length of the edge of the upper lid. This line brings the eyelid forward, and to be effective the usual eye colour must be placed above it: thus the eyelid will carry two colours, the high-light near the lashes, and the eye colour nearer the fold (Fig. 12E).



## SOURCES OF LIGHT (II)—LIGHTING APPARATUS

By C. HAROLD RIDGE, A.R.S.M., D.I.C., and F. S. ALDRED, A.M.Inst.C.E.

*Consulting Engineers*

**A**POTENTIAL difference of some 45 volts is necessary across the arc when properly adjusted, of which only about 5 volts are required on account of ohmic resistance, the rest being used to overcome a counter pressure, or back E.M.F. set up by the arc.

A steadying resistance made up of coils of resistance wire is always used and connected in series with the arc to maintain steady operation, this being required for a number of reasons. It prevents too large a current at the moment of striking the arc, counteracts small fluctuations in the supply voltage and the change in resistance of the carbons as they shorten in burning, and is also necessary because, the carbon arc having a "negative characteristic," the voltage across the arc decreases as the current increases.

For arc lamps working under steady conditions, and in which the carbons are fed by means of automatic mechanism, the value of the steadying resistance need be quite small, sufficient for a 5 to 10 volt drop, but under the conditions in which stage arcs work, where the carbons are fed by hand operation, frequently started and stopped, and the attention of the operator is required in working his plot and following actors on the stage, greater latitude is obtained by using a resistance capable of causing a voltage drop of about 35 volts with normal current. This means that a supply at 80 volts is required, and in this connexion it should be remembered a resistance larger than that required means a wastage of energy, watts being expended simply in heating up a resistance without any useful effect.

If a D.C. supply at 100 volts is available, then it may be cheaper to use it and to dissipate the extra voltage in a resistance than to install a motor generator to give a supply at 80 volts, but should it be necessary to use a motor generator or a rectifier to convert an A.C. supply, then the output voltage need not exceed 80 volts to maintain steady operation of the arcs.

The advent of the larger size gas-filled lamp is tending to displace arc lamps in stage work, but they are still used in the larger theatres where long throws are concerned, as, for instance, projection from the back of a large auditorium with arcs taking from 80 to 120 amps. Arcs of 10 to 30 amps. are used on perches, and 50 amp. arcs for special effects lanterns.

Producing an intense light, at an efficiency similar to that of the gas-filled lamp in the case of the open carbon arcs under consideration, their value is increased because the light approaches more nearly the "point" source than any other (especially desirable in the case of effect lanterns) and they are still the best means of obtaining high light output within a small compass. The disadvantages are their relatively high cost, both in purchase and in the carbon consumption in working. They require skilful handling to produce good steady beams, otherwise they are liable to splutter and hiss if the arc is not maintained at its proper length and correct current. Each arc generally requires an operator, involving extra labour charges, which in itself prevents their use in many theatres, and is also unsatisfactory because it takes the direct control out of the hands of the switchboard operator. Arcs cannot be dimmed, as can filament lamps, by introducing resistance into the circuit, but require for this purpose an iris diaphragm or other form of shutter, locally controlled.

A few notes on carbons may be helpful. They should be of good quality, suitable for hand feeding, and of sizes designed to suit the lamps in which they will be used. The pairing of the carbons is of importance. A larger positive for a given negative or vice versa means under, or over, loading of one or the other carbon, resulting in hissing, a lowering of the light efficiency, and unequal relative burning rates with increased carbon consumption. As carbons absorb moisture, they must be stored in a dry place.

## MERCURY VAPOUR LAMPS

These lamps are used in some of the large State theatres in Germany and Austria for the illumination of cycloramas.

Despite disadvantages of size and difficulties of operation, their value for this work lies in their efficiency and in the fact that the light emitted is richest in rays from the blue end of the spectrum. This being so, a large cyclorama can be illuminated to represent a bright daylight sky with a lower expenditure of energy than would be the case were gas-filled filament lamps or arc lamps used.

The light emitted from a source is made up of proportions of the different colours contained in the spectrum from the red, or lower end, up to the violet, which is within the range of ordinary vision. Infra-red, or heat rays, and ultra-violet or actinic rays, are also present, but, being invisible, need not be considered here. (The ultra-violet rays are, however, of importance in certain special effects and they will be referred to again.) Light from differing sources varies in its composition, and the tone or quality of any particular light is dependent upon the proportion and relative strengths of the colours which are present.

The following table indicates the composition of the light sources under consideration in terms of the main colour bands, and shows the large difference in the quality of the light from a gas-filled lamp, and the mercury arc, with the D.C. arc occupying a mid position—

	<i>Red</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>Blue</i>
Gas-filled lamp . . .	48·3%	40·8%	10·9%
D.C. arc . . .	41%	36·3%	22·7%
Mercury arc . . .	29%	30·3%	40·7%

## LUMINOUS DISCHARGE TUBE LIGHTING

Brief mention should be made of a new method of lighting that is now emerging from the experimental stage. This is the luminous discharge tube, and it remains to be seen whether its advent will result in the eventual abolition of the filament lamp. It appears, however, that under its present stage of development its use has definite advantages in certain fields of illumination, particularly in the lighting of streets. Stretches of roadways have been equipped with this lighting, both in this country and on the Continent, within the past two years with excellent results, indicating

that the stage of practical application has been reached.

Owing to this advance, it appears possible that the relatively near future may see its use for stage lighting, for which it has undoubted claims.

The high tension tube known as neon lighting is familiar owing to its wide use for advertising displays; it consists of a glass tube containing two electrodes, one at each end, across which a voltage is applied, thus causing a current to flow through a gas at low pressure contained within the tube and resulting in a luminous glow. Such tubes are technically called *Cold Cathode* tubes, and are unsuitable for general illumination purposes for the reasons that they require voltages of about 5000 to start the discharge, falling to some 1500 to maintain it, and also, on account of the small amount of light produced, of the order of 5 candles per foot of tubing. To give a light equal to that of a 1000-watt G.F. lamp some 300 ft. of tubing would be necessary.

## HOT CATHODE TUBES

It was discovered that by heating the cathode a heavy current could be satisfactorily passed without increasing the size of the electrodes, which in turn permits the use of much shorter tubes and consequently lower voltages across the electrodes, the voltages being in fact so much reduced that the discharge can be maintained on the ordinary supply voltages. A choking coil to limit the current and a small transformer to supply the energy to heat up the electrodes are necessary, besides a small high frequency coil to give the momentary high voltage to start the discharge.

The value of these lighting units lies in their efficiency, and in the case of stage lighting their ability to give coloured light according to the particular gas used in the tube; if neon gas is used red light is obtained, whilst mercury, sodium, and thallium vapours give blue, yellow, and green light respectively.

At present, however, these colours are very impure and the production of mono-chromatic light is a development to be hoped for, as is also a practical method of varying the light intensely for dimming purposes.

With regard to the efficiency, a gas-filled filament lamp radiates only about 8 per cent of the energy supplied to it in the form of visible rays,

those having wave-lengths from 0.38 to 0.76 microns (a micron being a thousandth part of a millimetre), the remainder of the energy being radiated in the non-luminous portions of the spectrum at the infra-red end. This wastage as far as useful light is concerned is the reason why a 100-watt G.F. lamp has an efficiency of only 12 lumens per watt expended. In the case of a gas discharge tube radiations are emitted of certain wave-lengths only, varying according to the

all directions from one source, and as a bare lamp must have protection against mechanical injury, it is usually enclosed in some form of metal box. This, then, is the simplest kind of flood to be

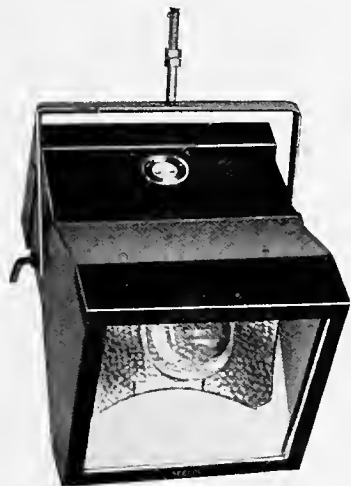


FIG. 17

*The Strand Electric Co.*

gas used, and it can be shown that under certain conditions luminous efficiencies of between 600 and 700 lumens per watt should be possible. Such high efficiencies may be obtained as developments proceed in commercial units; to-day, however, efficiencies of about 40 lumens per watt for a 400-watt lamp of this type, made by the General Electric Company, are obtained, and this compares with 15 lumens per watt for a G.F. filament lamp of similar rating.

#### STANDARD LIGHTING EQUIPMENT

The standard equipment of theatres at the present day is so varied that it is difficult to divide it into definite watertight compartments, but generally speaking the apparatus can be divided into two main classes. The first, flood lighting; the second, lighting by focus lamps.

**Floods.** The simplest possible form of flood light is a bare lamp. As light is rarely required in



FIG. 18

*The Strand Electric Co.*

found in the theatre. The amateur electrician can easily make up such floods for himself, using, if he is not competent to make it of sheet metal, old biscuit tins fitted with chimneys contrived out of treacle tins and the like. In Fig. 17 is illustrated one of the standard types of flood sold by all theatrical lighting firms. A stainless steel or aluminium reflector is provided in the cheaper makes

and a silvered glass reflector in the more expensive ones. These reflectors are slightly curved and their surfaces corrugated or dented in order to scatter the light as much as possible. This even distribution of light can be still further aided by the use of a ground glass or frosted gelatine diffusing screen placed in the grooves provided for that purpose. If glass screens are used for distributing or colouring the light, they should always be protected by a

trunnions, fork, and threaded stem, the latter being clamped into the telescopic stand shown. For overhead mounting the lantern is usually suspended from a barrel, and a special form of claw grip is screwed on to the stem for clamping to the barrel. A number of lanterns of various types shown clamped to such a barrel and ready for hanging by steel lines to the grid of a theatre will be found in Fig. 19. The usual way of con-



FIG. 19

*The Strand Electric Co.*

wire mesh screen, so that in the event of breakage actors standing on the stage below will not be injured by the fall of glass. Gelatine colour mediums are generally inserted into cardboard frames for use in these lanterns; or for the larger one, such as the 17 in. sun-ray flood, illustrated in Fig. 18, metal frames are used, as these latter lanterns take 1000-watt or 1500-watt lamps, in which case the heat would be too great for a cardboard frame. The lamps used in these lanterns are of the ordinary clear gas-filled type, not the projector type.

Such lanterns can be mounted in various ways, according to the position on the stage in which they are to be used. Fig. 18 shows a mounting for use on the stage floor and is commonly called a "wing flood." Lanterns are always fitted with

necting up these lanterns electrically is either to lead two or three feet of asbestos-covered flexible cable through a bushed hole in the side of the lantern, terminating in a male plug or connector, or to fix this male connector rigidly to the side of the box. The latter method is neater and is certainly very convenient for stage floor work, where it is only necessary to use a length of cable between a stage dip and a flood box. If, however, the lantern is afterwards required for use on a batten, it will be found that the point to which it is to be connected is probably a socket, necessitating a small length of cable with a plug and female connector. The former arrangement is, therefore, more convenient where such interchanges are likely to take place, as the lantern tails can be plugged straight into the socket.

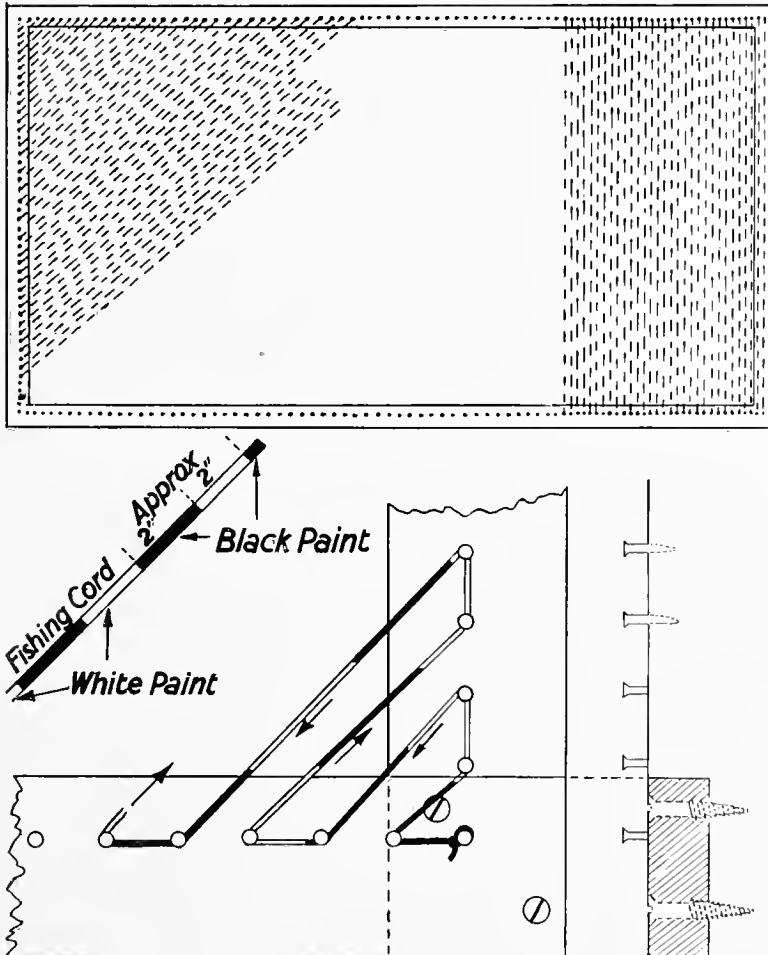
## RAIN—II

By A. E. PETERSON

*Founder, Sunday Night Adventurers ; Secretary, Kingston Marionette Players, etc.*

**H**ERE are two pleasing rain effects that are suitable for children's plays. To make the first one procure sufficient lengths of planed wood about two inches wide by one inch

small wire nails, or cabinetmaker's panel pins, three eighths of an inch long, are tacked ; they are inserted at an acute angle, and sufficient of the head of the nail is left protruding to hold the



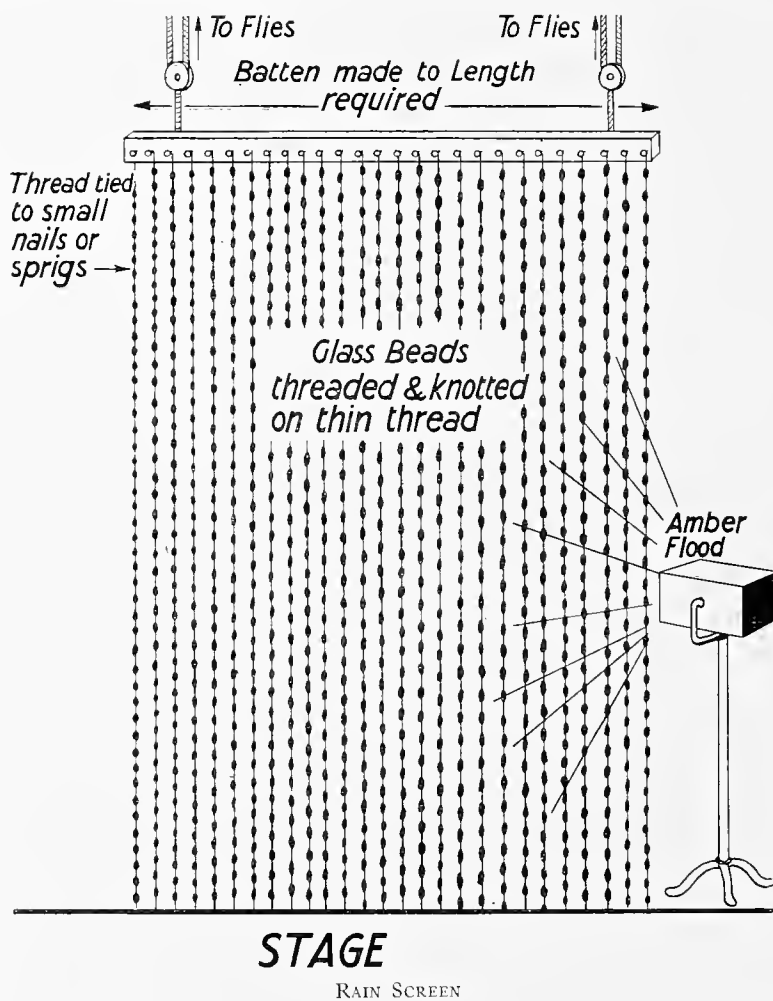
RAIN FRAME

thick—or of stouter material if the frame required is large—and shape it according to requirements. The joints should be halved and screwed together. Along the top, bottom, and, if necessary, the sides,

fishing line or white cord that is strung, harplike, over them. When the fishing line has been run in the direction the rain is required to fall, the line is painted in irregular streaks of white and

black, silver and black, or similar toned shades. The painted streaks should be about two to three inches long. If it is desired to give the rain a "slant," this may be done, care being taken that the rain slants evenly. By placing the sprigs in

These long lengths may be prepared in small pieces of about two or three feet long and then joined to whatever length is required. The bottom ends are attached to a batten at stage level, but the weight is sustained by lines joining the



the frame at exact distances apart evenness is ensured. The streaks of black and white should be irregularly spaced.

The second effect is a rain screen, simple but effective. All that is required is a long batten on which is tacked sprigs with the heads left protruding. To the head of each sprig is attached a long length of thread upon which is fastened small glass beads tied about two inches apart.

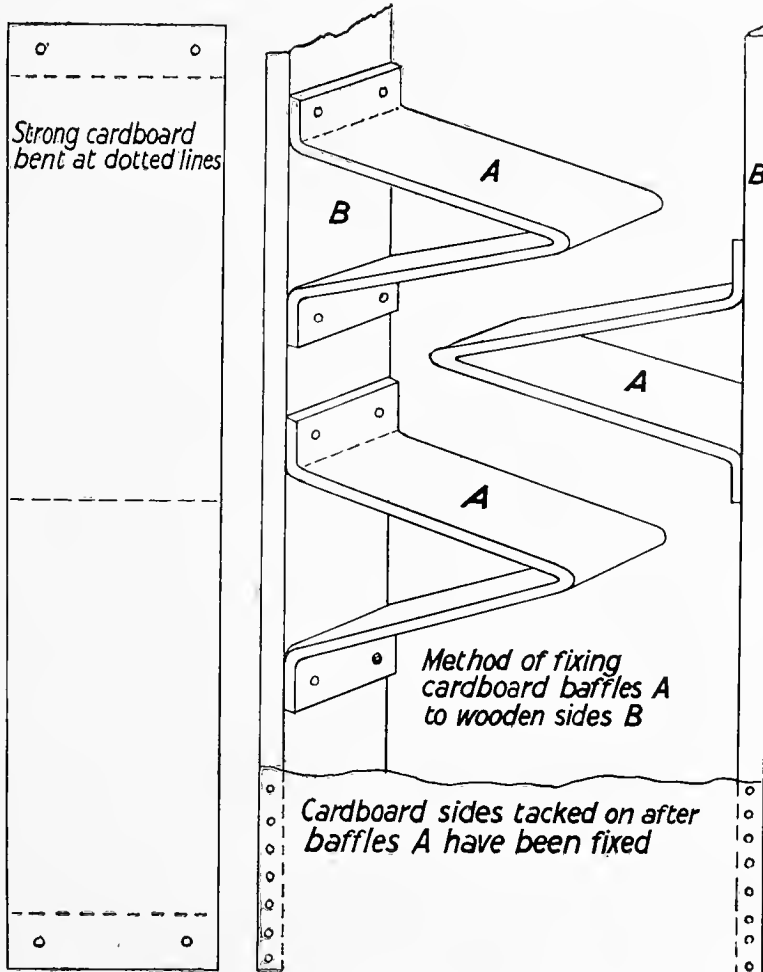
ends of the battens. By vibrating the upper batten and playing amber floods upon the screen the suggestion of falling rain is obtained.

#### RAIN NOISES

To produce the sound of rain falling off stage procure a bucket full of fine washed gravel, such as builders use for pebble dashing the front of houses, and three large empty cardboard boxes.

Place the boxes on the floor of the stage and rest the bucket on an upturned wooden box high enough for the purpose. The person making the rain sound takes a handful of the gravel and allows it to trickle through his fingers so that it

A rain box is a simple piece of apparatus and can easily be made. Two long pieces of matchboarding, four inches wide and about six or seven feet long, form the sides. At the top and the bottom the sides are held in position by two pieces



RAIN BOX

falls into the first of the empty boxes. When this box is three parts full the trickle is directed into the second box, the contents of box No. 1 are returned to the supply bucket, and the procedure is repeated until the rain ceases. If the tone of this effect does not satisfy, the gravel may be made to fall on to a sheet of tin, plate glass, plywood, or other material placed so that the gravel after striking it falls into the collecting box as before.

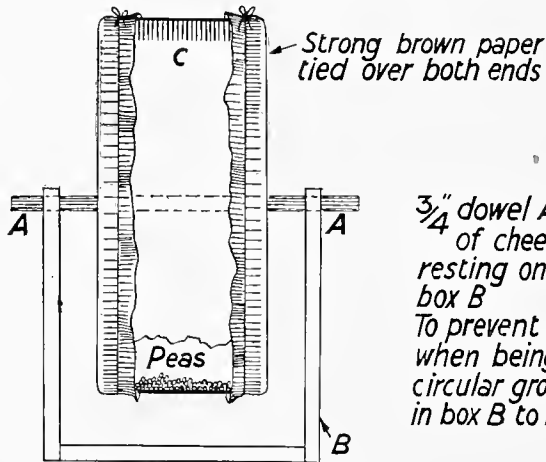
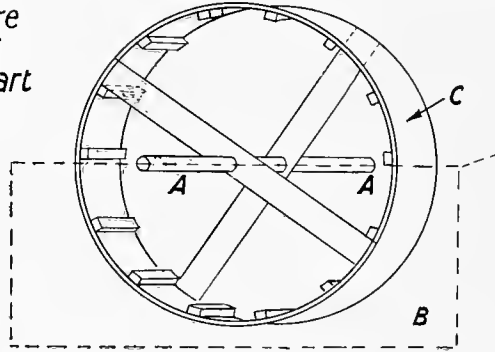
of wood four inches square. Sheets of cardboard, bent as in the illustration, are tacked to the inside of the box, leaving a space at each end large enough to hold a couple of pints of dried peas. The sides of the rain box are next filled in; long pieces of thin cardboard will suffice. Before fastening the last sheet in place the dried peas are placed in the box, and the effect is obtained by allowing the peas to run from end to end of the

box. The noise of the peas pattering down the inside of the apparatus can be made continuous by reversing the rain box when necessary.

Another type of rain box, cheap and easy to make, consists of the circular side of a wooden cheese box, which is about six inches deep. Two pieces of wood, about an inch thick by an inch

it with cord. The brown paper is pierced to take the axle, and after a pint of dried peas has been poured through one of the holes the axle is fitted and the apparatus is complete. To simplify working, place the cheese box in an empty soap box that is deep enough to hold it. At each side of the box the circular dowelling rests in a groove,

*Wood laths  $\frac{1}{4}$ " square  
nailed to inside of  
box C about 3" apart*



*$\frac{3}{4}$ " dowel A through centre  
of cheese box C,  
resting on sides of wooden  
box B  
To prevent box C sliding  
when being revolved, semi-  
circular grooves should be cut  
in box B to receive dowel A*

RAIN BOX

and a half wide, are fitted across the widest part. Before nailing them in position find the exact centre, and, holding both pieces of wood together, bore holes through them to take a piece of stout dowelling about two feet long. Tack strips of builders' laths, six inches long and about three eighths of an inch thick, to the inside of the cheese box, inserting the tacks from the outside. Close the ends of the box by means of two sheets of stout brown paper, which, after being laid over the ends of the box, are securely fastened round

and the apparatus when rotated by hand makes the sound of falling rain.

The simplest method is to obtain a new dripping tin, about 12 or 16 inches long by 10 or 12 inches wide, or a large circular tin lid, in which is placed dried peas that are slowly rolled from side to side, the peas being kept in constant motion as far as possible. If peas do not make sufficient noise, lead shot, which can be purchased by the pound at any good ironmonger's shop, may be used. Experiment will prove which material is more satisfactory.



## AUDITIONS AND CASTING

By DUMAYNE WARNE

THE important thing to bear in mind when holding an audience is, as in most other tests, the end in view. This sounds ridiculous, but it is extraordinary how many Committees vaguely hold an audition without in the least remembering that there are two entirely different kinds of audition, each of which requires to be conducted in an entirely different way, and each of which is designed to find out entirely different things.

The two kinds are briefly—

1. That held for the purpose of finding out if a person is suitable to become a member of the Society.

2. That held for the purpose of ascertaining the suitability of a person, already a member of the Society, for a particular part in a contemplated production.

The essential difference in the manner of conducting these is that, whereas in testing the suitability of candidates for admission to the Society it is essential that they should not be made nervous, in the case of one who is already a member, and who is being considered for a part in a production, this does not matter.

The candidate who applies for admission to a Society may well be a little nervous at his first appearance, especially if his talents are, as yet, not well developed. But a little help and encouragement at this stage may bring into the Society a member of whom, in a few years, it may be most proud, whereas frigidity and stiffness may cause a candidate to be rejected, only to be accepted later by the kinder and more intelligent committee of another Society, for which he may become one of the star performers.

All candidates for admission to a Society should be asked to complete a form of application, as it is of great advantage to the Secretary for record purposes. Further, the manner in which the form is completed may reveal traits of character, personal details, etc., and lead to the acceptance or the rejection of an applicant without an audition. I give on the next page a copy of the

sort of form that will serve the purpose. This can, of course, be expanded or compressed as desired.

It does not much matter who constitutes the Audition Committee for testing newcomers to a Society, provided that there is someone competent to examine them in all the branches that they offer—Appearance, Deportment, Diction, etc., and, in the case of Operatic Societies, Singing and Dancing.

It is best for the audition to take place in a fair-sized room, and for the Committee (it is better to have three or four people rather than only one or two, but nothing useful is to be gained by having too many) to sit at one end of it, perhaps behind a table. The candidates should be kept outside the audition chamber, as it is nerve racking to have to perform at an audition with an audience (this applies to application for membership *only*). When the members of the Committee are ready, the Secretary, who acts as Master of Ceremonies throughout, will go out and, in as friendly a manner as possible, ask an applicant to step forward. He will then take in the candidate, and, as it were, introduce him to the Chairman of the Committee.

The Chairman, who will previously have been provided by the Secretary with the candidate's application form, should ask the candidate to get a book (which will have been placed at the other end of the room) and to read a passage from it. This will test two or three things at the same time, namely, appearance walking away and towards the table, the stance when stationary, the quality of the speaking voice, and if the candidate can read intelligently at sight. Of course, the candidate will read at a fair distance from the Committee table.

Even in the case of applicants for the operatic chorus it is well to apply this test.

For the singing test, which should take place next, there must be a competent accompanist. A candidate cannot possibly show what he or she can do at an audition unless the music is properly played. If the candidate brings his own

## M. O. B. OPERATIC AND DRAMATIC SOCIETY

*Application for Acting Membership*

I desire to join the M.O.B.O. & D.S. I understand that I may be called upon to attend an audition.

Name .....

Please write clearly and state whether Mrs., Miss, or Mr.

Address .....

The candidate is requested to answer the following questions—

- (1) Do you sing? .....
- (2) If so, state the pitch of your voice.....
- (3) Do you dance?.....
- (4) If so, please state whether Ballet, Character, or Musical Comedy, etc.....
- (5) Have you any previous experience of the stage, either amateur or professional?.....
- (6) If so, please say whether Operatic or Dramatic, Chorus or Principal, and give the names of any parts you have played, with the names of the plays and the company in which you played them .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- (7) Remarks. Please give here any information about yourself which might be of assistance to the Casting Committees and also say if there is any particular type of part for which you would especially like to be considered.....
- .....
- .....
- .....

(If necessary, continue on back of form)

accompanist, the official accompanist should retire gracefully, and perhaps offer to turn over. The private pianist should be admitted to the room only when he or she is required. The degree of difficulty of the singing test will be governed by the number of members who are wanted. If more candidates present themselves than can be admitted to the Society, the test may include sight-reading, etc. On the other hand, if there are more vacancies than candidates, the ability to sing in tune may suffice.

All is now ready for the dancing test. Female candidates will have been warned by the Secretary that they will be expected to demonstrate their skill at dancing, if they have stated that they are dancers, so they will be suitably dressed. For girls who wish to offer dancing but have not a solo to perform, it is well to have a competent person, such as an experienced member of the Society, to teach all the candidates who are waiting their turn for audition a sequence of simple steps in the ante-room. This serves several useful purposes: (1) it keeps those who are waiting employed and prevents them from getting nervous; (2) it tests their neatness of movement; (3) it tests their faculty for learning quickly.

It will be found that some candidates pick up dances quickly but roughly; others slowly but much more neatly.

When all have done their speaking and singing tests, they should be asked to dance as a troupe before the Committee.

The disadvantage of this method is that the breathing of the singers may be slightly affected by their previous exertions, but in the case of candidates whose singing is only of the chorus standard this is not likely to matter much, and any who object can be taken inside before they begin to learn the dance. Alternatives are either to have the dancing audition on another day or to have it later in the evening.

Nothing is to be gained by having an elaborate system of marking at such an audition. All that is required is to discover whether candidates are good enough to become members of the Society, or whether, in the opinion of the Committee, they may, with encouragement, become good enough.

Whether or not latent talent is to be accepted is a matter for those who are responsible for the

formation of a new Society to decide when they see how many candidates offer themselves for audition, bearing in mind, if the number of applications is large, the desired membership of the new Society. This may justify the use of a system of marking. The result should be communicated by each Adjudicator in writing, so that it cannot be overheard, to the Chairman of the Committee, that the candidate is—

(1) Good enough;

(2) Will probably be good enough with further tuition and/or experience;

(3) Will never be good enough.

For the purpose of an audition of this kind this marking is adequate.

An analysis of the independent reports by the members of the Audition Committee will probably decide the fate of the candidates at once. Borderline cases will have to be decided by conference, the requirements of the Society being the chief consideration, i.e. whether more members are required or not.

Applicants should be informed of the decision of the committee by letter and at the same time. This will avoid all sorts of unpleasantness.

In the case of an audition that is held to determine the suitability of a person, already a member of the Society, for a particular part in a contemplated production, the conditions should be entirely different.

In the first place, it is desirable that the audition should be held in the theatre or hall in which the performance is to take place. This is usually not impossible to arrange. Secondly, it is an advantage to have an audience (this should consist of members of the Society), because the possible nervousness of candidates is not now of primary importance.

The Selection Committee should sit in the dress circle, or in some other suitably railed off part of the theatre, where they will be absolutely free from the influence of the remainder of the company (this is important). The others can occupy the stalls.

It is desirable for the producer to be present at this audition, whether he be allowed a say in the proceedings or not. His opinion is always of value in borderline cases. Some Societies allow the producer to choose his own cast at the audition, but I do not consider that this is altogether wise. There are sometimes things to be taken into consideration

that an "outside" person cannot be expected to know. There are other things to be thought of at these auditions. (1) Everybody applying or being asked to be tried for a part should have the same chances of seeing the book and the music; (2) if a scheme of marking candidates is adopted, every member of the Committee that is responsible for choosing the cast should be agreed about the scale on which marks are to be distributed.

The allocation of marks at these auditions is most difficult. Different members have different opinions on what number of points out of so many a performance is worth. If a simple scheme is adopted, such as asking adjudicators to put candidates into a number of well defined classes each of which has a name instead of a figure, much confusion is avoided. For example, if two adjudicators are asked to say in which of the following classes a candidate should be placed, they are much more likely to agree than if they are asked to give him a mark out of, say, 10.

- (1) Excellent.
- (2) Very good.
- (3) Good.
- (4) Very fair.
- (5) Fair.

Apart from the question of artistic suitability, there are other things that Casting Committees have to consider in the casting of parts.

The policy of the Society itself may be that the same principals shall not play the leading parts in consecutive shows. Of two candidates of equal suitability for a part, one may bring into the house much more money. With some Societies this may not matter; with others it may. These and other points must be considered by Casting Committees before any announcements can be made.

The audition, which will have been conducted in much the same way as the first one, with the Secretary as M.C., being over, the candidates will disperse, and the Committee will adjourn to a suitable room for a round table discussion, a room

in which all the pros and cons of each applicant's suitability or unsuitability for each part in the play can be talked over and a complete cast chosen.

Should one of the members of the Committee be a candidate for a part, he or she should retire from the room when the part is under discussion. While it is desirable that members of the Selection Committee should not be candidates for parts, this restriction is not really practicable, as those who are no longer active in their interest may have lost touch with the needs and feelings of the moment, and those who are keenest may probably be the best performers. Nevertheless, any suspicion that members of the Casting Committee choose one another for the best parts should be allayed whenever possible.

When a complete cast has been selected, it should be typed and sent to each member with a rehearsal list. All the members should be informed at the same time, and the members of the Committee themselves should do their best to overcome the evil that arises from "rumours" by observing a strict silence on all confidential matters.

In some Societies the decisions of the Casting Committees have to be approved by a General Committee. As the time between the two meetings is the danger period, it should be short.

Casting is a most difficult task. However well the work is done, some members are certain to be disappointed and dissatisfied. For this and other reasons members of the Committee should be absolutely conscientious and fair, and particularly careful that the announcements of all their decisions are made in the proper form and through the proper channels. An amateur can bear a good deal more disappointment in the privacy of his house than he can in front of the members of the Society. If, after having done their work conscientiously and made their announcements properly, the members of the Casting Committee receive a little more praise than blame they will have done very well, for praise of Casting Committees is rare indeed.

# PERSONALITY, INDIVIDUALITY, AND INTERPOLATIONS

By D. GRAHAM DAVIS

*Editor of "The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal"*

THERE is an often-expressed argument that playing in Gilbert and Sullivan opera gives no scope for personality. This sentiment is absurd; individuality, perhaps, may get but little chance, but personality—if it be worth the name—cannot be smothered.

Those who advance this first theory complain when, on the professional or amateur stage, the parts are not performed just as they were in the original productions. Such critics allow themselves to overlook the great advantage the original artists possessed in playing parts which, in most instances, were specially written for them. In allowing newcomers to play the parts in a manner which, though dissimilar to that of the original artist, is more fitted to the style and personality of the actor, the authorities are themselves giving the lie to this criticism.

A character that frequently comes in for much adverse criticism in this respect is the name part in *The Mikado*. Because Richard Temple, who created it, played the part just "so," his interpretation must have been the right one, and all others wrong—contrary to tradition—and so on. Temple's performance was magnificent, and it will not detract from its excellence once more to emphasize the great advantage this actor had over those who followed him, in that he and his personality were in the author's mind when the part was written. In making comparisons, the personalities of his successors must be borne in mind. For this reason one cannot imagine, say, Mr. Darrell Fancourt playing the part in the same manner as did Temple (in a quiet, suave way) without losing the effectiveness of his vivid presentment. In the same way Temple would have failed had the positions been reversed, and he had tried to play the part in a manner foreign to his style. It is so with all the many Mikados who have appeared since the opera was first produced.

The present-day rendering of the Duke of Plaza-Toro receives much of the same sort of

criticism. Here, admittedly, the case is somewhat different, for, when the opera was written, the composition of the Savoy company had undergone several changes. Grossmith, the comedy lead, was no longer of their number, and the Duke was played by a tall, well-graced actor, the late Frank Wyatt. His interpretation received much praise, but it was quite unlike the Lord Chancellor, Ko-Ko, and others of this "family."

In course of time the rôle came to be played by the artist responsible for the "Grossmith parts," and became associated, in the public's mind, with those parts. Consequently, the audience looks for it to be played in the same vein; as an engaging and whimsical rogue, rather than as a grave and courtly senor. Here, again, the personality of the actor enters into the matter, although there is no doubt that, if he had been allowed to do so, Sir Henry Lytton could have played the Duke of Plaza-Toro in quite as dignified and stately a fashion as did Mr. Wyatt.

It is largely due to this mistaken connexion between individuality and personality that so many amateur actors and producers fail to bring out the most effective work that is in them. The actor, cast for a leading part, endeavours to visit the D'Oyly Carte Company, and instead of taking valuable hints as to how to play his part, tries to work up a slavish imitation—as he has been taught to believe to be the correct thing—of the contemporary artist playing the part in question. The producer, and especially those who have worked in the D'Oyly Carte organization, will try, further, to model the conscientious amateur's characterization to the individual mannerisms of whoever may have been playing the part when he (the producer) was with the company. The result is that one gets the genius of the producer and the amateur actor merged in an unnatural combination of, say, Fred Billington and Sydney Granville.

This photographic imitation is not art; nor is

it pleasing. Amateur actors should temper their imitative powers with a realization of their own drawbacks and advantages. The producer, equally, must make full allowances for his material. As one man's meat is another's poison, so may an effective intonation or gesture used by Sir Henry

libretto, which can be used by amateurs with absolute propriety, there are others, often heard in amateur productions, which were permitted as the personal "perquisites" of individual actors. In addition to those which had Gilbert's approval there were others which found their way into the



Photo by J. W. Debenham

PHOEBE WHEEDLES THE KEYS FROM SHADBOLT

This Shadbolt's performance was most satisfactory because he did not attempt to imitate the professional "star." Taking into account his personality and build, such imitation would have ruined a very capable presentation.

Lytton in, say, *Princess Ida* go for nothing in the mouth or hands of an amateur King Gama.

The matter of interpolations to the text is not so far removed from this question of personality as might appear at first sight. Many interpolations were inserted with full authority because they fitted in with the personality of the actor, but were properly discontinued when another artist succeeded to the part. Although there are several interpolations (they cannot properly be called "gags") which do not appear in the

performances against his strict edict. In the days when there were six, or more, companies on tour it was impossible to apply as strict a supervision as might have been desirable. Thus many a word or sentence—introduced as a murmured aside—gradually became louder and louder until it was plainly audible.

Every actor knows how the illusion of intelligent listening is helped by the *appearance* of interjecting an occasional "yes" or "oh?" during another's speech without actually saying a word

aloud. No one would suggest that such aids to realism should be exalted to the status of "lines"; had this been the intention, the author would indicate it. Unfortunately, many of those producing the operas to-day seem to have heard most of these unauthorized interpolations, and do their best to perpetuate them as authentic additions.

We might now consider the points at which some little addition or comment is permitted. The catalogue may not be complete, but it is at least exhaustive, and it can be taken, if any major interpolation of words is ever suggested which is not mentioned in this article, that such an addition is illegitimate.

Taking the operas in chronological order, we find that there are three interpolations in *Trial by Fury*. The first occurs in the judge's song, when the lines are reached—

"The rich attorney my character high  
Tried vainly to disparage."

Here those in court interject an incredulous "No," to which the judge replies, more in sorrow than in anger, "Yes!" The whole incident is over in less time than it takes to read this description. Later, the jury rise, and loudly cry, "Come, substantial damages, dam . . .", to be quelled by the usher's "Silence in court." The business here is that one juror remains standing; the usher tells him to "sit down." These two words, accompanying the gesture, may be just audible. Towards the end of the opera, when the Plaintiff and Defendant have been struggling (in the duet "I love him"), and the first-named has collapsed in her counsel's arms, the usher endeavours to revive her. Over his shoulder he mutters to the Defendant "You brute!" This, too, is heard by the audience, but neither remark, it must be stressed, is to be given the value of a line; they are really semi-audible asides.

In *H.M.S. Pinafore* we get a small vocal interpolation. Replying to Sir Joseph Porter, Ralph says that he "can hum a little, your honour." "Then hum this at your leisure," remarks Sir Joseph—"this" being the trio, "A British Tar is a Soaring Soul." Before he actually hands the manuscript to Ralph, Sir Joseph unfolds the music, strikes an attitude, and attempts to sing. But a high pitched "A Brit . . ." is as far as he gets. One has heard amateur Sir Josephs who have carried this business so far as to sing the

complete first verse in a high falsetto, thereby spoiling the song when it should be first heard a few minutes later.

Major-General Stanley gets stuck for rhymes when he is singing "I am the very model of a modern Major-General" in *The Pirates of Penzance*. Under his breath, he is heard trying over possible words, ejaculating "Ah, I've got it" when the right word occurs to him. If an encore is taken, the music stops, as in the first rendering, for this business, but the General goes straight on with "You'll say a better Major-General has never rode a horse." This brings forth general laughter from the stage, and Edith whispers to him his mistake. "Ah," says the General, "I've got it again," and the music and song continue. This, too, occupies less time than it takes to write of it. The General also alters a line in the encore verse of "When the foeman bares his steel." "Yes, but you don't go," he has sung, but the last time he reaches this line he substitutes "Damme, you don't go," to the distress of the scandalized girls.

The next three operas seem to be free from any such additions, but they crop up again in *The Mikado*. "Gentlemen," says Ko-Ko after his first entrance, "I am much touched by this reception." The nobles kow-tow to him, at the same time uttering a word that may best be transliterated as "M'yah-h." Ko-Ko acknowledges this with a bow and a "M'yah-h." He reaches the end of the speech, and gives the cue for the "Little List" song. Through the music the chorus say this mysterious word twice. Each time, after its utterance, Ko-Ko repeats the word, bowing first to one side and then to the other. Thus between the start of the music and the beginning of the singing "M'yah-h" is heard four times.

In the second act of this opera there are a few permissible vocal additions. Yum-Yum is comforting Nanki-Poo in the speech beginning "Darling—I don't want to appear selfish . . ." Ko-Ko is lying prostrate, on his face, at the other side of the stage. As each endearment is uttered he is heard to give a little groan, as of agony that these "dears" and "my owns" are being addressed to another. Each groan might vary from the others, and the last one might be given more as an admonitory "Ah!" Later, in the scene in which

it is discovered that Nanki-Poo has apparently been beheaded, the Mikado offers solace by observing "I've no doubt he thoroughly deserved all he got." As he rises, Ko-Ko has been known to say "And he got it," but this has tended to fall out of use in recent years.

It is in this same scene that the one authorized "gag" in the whole of the operas occurs. When



Photo by J. W. Debenham

"GENTLEMEN, I AM MUCH TOUCHED BY THIS  
RECEPTION"

There is no indication in the libretto of the interjections  
which occur during this speech in *The Mikado*

the Mikado asks for Nanki-Poo's address, the libretto gives "Knightsbridge" as the answer. When the opera was first produced there was, in fact, an exhibition Japanese village near Knightsbridge. The appropriateness of this address did not hold good in later days, nor was it certain that it would be fully appreciated outside London. Consequently, Gilbert laid down that the printed word should be replaced by one of local significance. This decree has tended to become widened in scope, and one frequently hears the use of some place that may be in the news;

Geneva, for instance, during an international conference; Downing Street or Chequers in a political crisis. As a rule some local place, such as a housing estate, football ground, or greyhound track, will be found more in keeping with the original intention, and the amateur Ko-Ko would be well advised to use such an address in his reply.

In *Ruddigore* Dick Dauntless has two interjections while Robin is singing "My boy, you may take it from me." In the second verse the last line but one is: "I fail in—and why, sir?" There is a pause in the music, during which Dick replies "I don't know." At the same time in the last verse, to the question "You ask me the reason?" Dick replies "No, I didn't." The further remark "I thought you did," is the personal perquisite of a famous Robin of modern times, and should not be used. In their next scene (with Rose) Robin remarks "That's only a bit of it" when Dick displays his skill in dancing a hornpipe.

During the quartet, "A Regular Royal Queen" (*The Gondoliers*), Tessa makes remarks to her companions that appear to bring forth replies. Actually no recognizable word should be heard, whatever may be murmured *sotto voce*. "Very well, Duchess" and other abominations frequently uttered aloud in amateur performances are entirely wrong, and should not be countenanced.

But towards the end of the second act of this opera there is a large addition that is not covered by the libretto. The Duke of Plaza-Toro has a speech immediately before the gavotte. In three places this speech is broken by the note (*business*). That following "... a good deal of this sort of thing" is limited to some elegant bowing. "A little of this sort of thing" is succeeded by a remark, addressed to some imaginary person "Delighted to see you; delighted. Any time you're passing—pass!" When the Duke says "And possibly just a *soupeon* . . .," Giuseppi interjects "What song?" The Duke repeats "*Soupeon*," adding, by way of explanation, "French word." It is then permissible for the Duke gently to illustrate his remark by saying (again to an imaginary person) "Ah, I see you, you little heart killer," at the same time digging the two kings in the ribs.



## THE ROLE OF THE CHOREOGRAPHER—II

By ARNOLD L. HASKELL

*Co-Founder of the Camargo Society, Director of the Ballet Club, etc.*

COSTUME has had a close link with the development of dancing and yet in one limited sense it is the least important feature of ballet. From the public point of view, the box office, it is perhaps the most important.

The whole aim of the decorative artist is as close a co-operation as possible with the choreographer, so that he will stress the choreographer's design and never confuse it. He may have remarkable ideas on paper, but he must always bear in mind the fact that his costumes are to be worn by people in violent motion, and that therefore they must be light and well balanced. What is more logical than the conventional ballet skirt that spreads itself out and balances the dancer like the rim of a top? It is a design that has been evolved by experience. Costumes in mica or other rigid material may make an admirable theatrical effect, when the dancers are static, but so hamper their movements as to be bad designs. Of all the sketches that are carried out by enterprising young artists for ballet, over half are impracticable from the first. Let us take some definite examples: Balanchin's *Cat* was one of the most popular of the late Diaghileff ballets. Its great costume and scenic feature was the material in which the designs were executed, mica and oil cloth. Well-lit upon the rise of the curtain, the effect was truly amazing. However, once the action began, the oil cloth was so slippery that the "ballerina" had to tip her shoes with rubber, naturally handicapping her movements considerably. This seems an illogical intrusion of the artist, and however effective it may have been, I would call it a bad *décor*. We have another example in the costumes by André Masson for Massine's masterpiece *Les Présages*. Here, though the colouring seems to me harmonious, the dancer's arms are covered with a woollen material that rucks up in movement, concealing a naturally beautiful line and giving the comical illusion of long-sleeved underwear that undoubtedly damages an impressive sight.

In the history of the Diaghileff ballet the changes that *décor* has undergone have altered the

whole of the decorative art of the theatre. It was Diaghileff's aim to anticipate public taste, so that an artist would be dropped, seemingly capriciously at the height of his success, but actually in a manner that probably conserved public interest in him far longer than otherwise would have been the case. When, in an interview after the War, Diaghileff was asked about the revival of his early ballet successes, he said that if they were revived, all the colours would need intensifying in order for them to live up to the memory of the public's first startled shock.

Early ballet scenery was built on a solid scale, semi-realistic, semi-fantastic, having little relation to the action. To-day it might appeal to us as having the quaint charm of an old print—that is all.

Alexandre Benois played the great rôle in harmonizing costume and *décor* and bringing them into partnership with the rest. Painter, historian, and expert on the French 18th century, which had a profound influence on all his work, he was associated with Diaghileff from the beginning and played a major rôle in the creation of the ballet as we know it to-day. It was Bakst, however, who caused the real world revolution, changed sober tints into pure bright colour and started the craze for the Russian decorative art that we see in such companies as the Chauve Souris. Yet Bakst is not to me typically Russian, and Russian art is actually far less exotic. Bakst has synthesized and exaggerated Russian decorative characteristics. He has stressed the Oriental. At his best he has produced masterpieces such as *Thamar*; at his worst he is nearly vulgar, but he always retains an admirable sense of the theatre. By far the most interesting Russian artists employed by Diaghileff were Goncharova and Larionov, who combined a modern inventive outlook with tradition. Larionov I believe to be one of the greatest of all stage designers with a latitude ranging from the legendary *Children's Tales* to the final Diaghileff creation *The Fox*. He has had a profound influence on his fellow artists, including Picasso, and has never received the public

recognition due to him as did Bakst. He is undoubtedly the superior of the two.

It was only natural after the Oriental riot of colour of a Bakst that Diaghileff should turn to the calm logic of the French. It is rare that a fine easel artist finds success in the theatre, the qualities required being so different, but in Pablo Picasso and André Derain great artists were found who could subordinate their art to an ensemble.

*d'Enfants*, by Joàn Miro, suggests endless new possibilities for *décor* by the artists of this School, for with their aims an atmosphere of fantasy can be created in the most extraordinary manner and the dancers and *décor* become one picture—the ideal of the scenic artist.

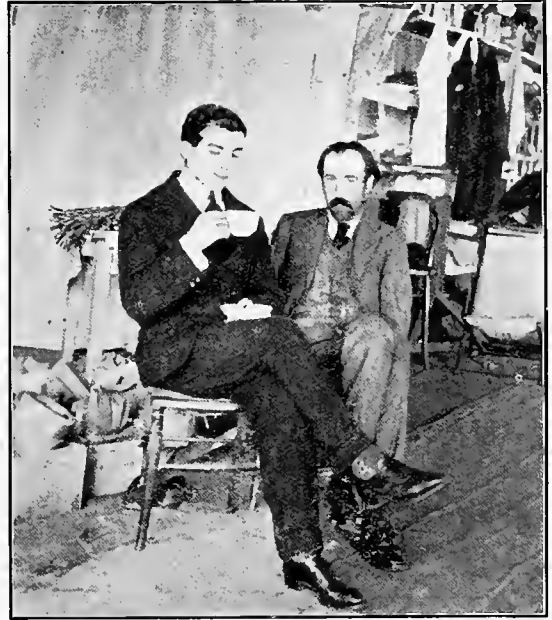
We in England without our own fixed organizations have not yet produced any definite decorative work, so that we have had to a large



\* DIAGHILEFF AT V. POLUNIN'S SCENIC STUDIO  
WITH PICASSO AND POLUNIN  
(Copyright V. Polunin)

France alone, perhaps, can produce perfect collaboration between her different artists. There is a sensitive atmosphere in Paris that brings about parallel movements in art and synchronizes them. It is for that reason alone that Paris has been the headquarters of ballet, for French dancers are exceedingly mediocre; not one has ever joined the Diaghileff troupe, and our audiences in England are far less capricious and more understanding.

The latest decorative phase is exceedingly interesting. Just as cubism originally turned to ballet in *Parade* in order to assert itself with a large public, so now has *surréalisme* with results that are far more beautiful than on canvas. *Jeux*



MASSINE WITH THE ARTIST AT V. POLUNIN'S  
SCENIC STUDIO  
(Copyright V. Polunin)

extent to rely on the easel artist, who has almost invariably been unable to realize that he is not painting a picture to be hung on the line. The results have been something reminiscent of French work, which, however, instead of falling in line with the rest, continually obtruded itself on one's attention at the expense of the choreography. The two genuine scenic artists, Hedley Briggs and William Chappell, we have so far produced are both dancers, which brings home my point of collaboration very forcibly. Vladimir Polunin, who introduced Russian methods of scenic painting to Western Europe, may well form an English school, as he teaches this subject, and his

\* I am grateful to Mr. V. Polunin for his kindness in allowing me to reproduce here for the first time this rare photograph.—A.L.H.

series of designs for the "Vic-Wells" company gave him remarkable opportunities.

From the moment that ballet attempts to tell a story the literary element is present in some degree, but, as ballet seeks to tell in movement what cannot be expressed in words, literature plays a subordinate rôle. There, where it predominates and long programme notes are essential for understanding and enjoyment, the choreographer has clearly failed in his intention.

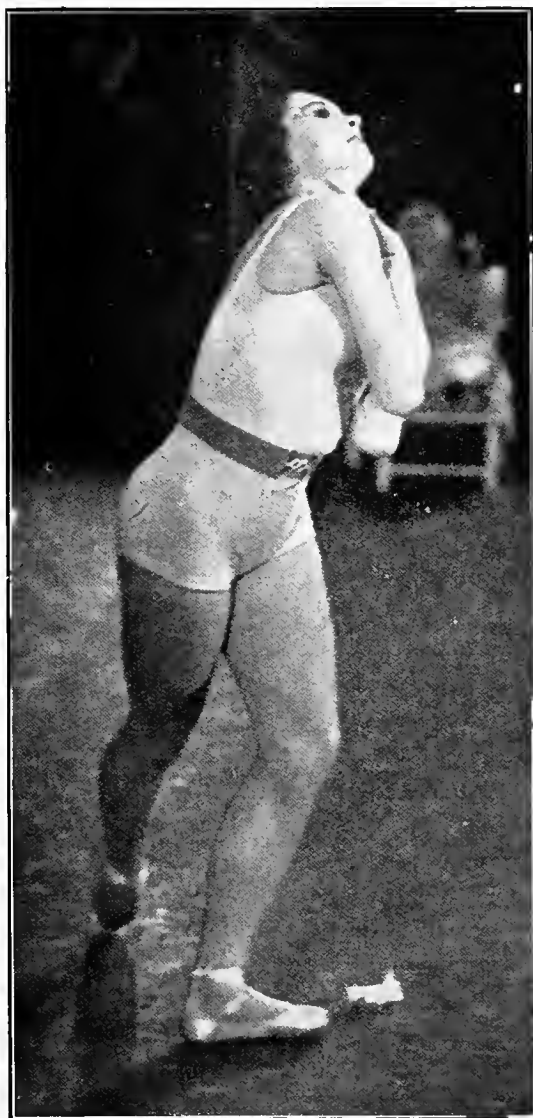
If we follow the historical development of the theme or story in ballet we will better realize the position, and the differences between the old and the modern.

In the romantic period of 1830, the grand days of Taglioni, the subject would be based on some plot by Scott, Byron, Gautier, Schiller, and require development in several acts, development laid down by precedent, as in opera; so much given to *pas d'action* that actually develops the story; so much to formal dances with the ballerina's *adagio* occurring at a definite time of the evening.

In the original Russian ballet the story comes from fairy tale or legend: *Sleeping Princess*, *Aladdin*, *Casse Noisette*, *The Little Humpbacked Horse*, etc. Again it is presented in a conventional manner: fine *divertissements* bound together by *pas d'action*. The story may seem complicated and require elaborate programme notes, but actually this is not the case because it is generally known from childhood by the entire audience, and is in any case of no importance whatsoever, being merely a peg upon which to hang so many dances. There is no question of an harmonious whole. Two such ballets in severely curtailed form are popular to-day: *Aurora's Wedding*, consisting of the finest dances from *The Sleeping Princess*, and *The Swan Lake*, which is a slice out of a long and elaborate plot which, curiously enough, concerns dual personality, and was originally performed by two ballerinas—an idea that was hailed as strikingly modern in the ballet *Anna-Anna*. (The heroine of *The Swan Lake* was "Odette-Odilia.")

It did not seem in any way strange or sacrilegious to hack these works about. On the contrary, it probably preserved their beautiful choreography by making them acceptable to modern audiences. The modern attitude towards art exists in these old-fashioned works, for just as the

modern painter says: "The line's the thing, not the subject," and hails Ingres, the painter of innumerable "subject" pictures, as his inspiration, so here the dance is the thing and the subject of



BARONOVA IN MASSINE'S "BEACH"

(Brewster: Ballet Centre)

no more importance than in an Ingres painting. It might be completely abstract for all the importance it has. And so the seeming extremes meet and with no paradox or involved reasoning.

With Fokine the idea of harmony predominates. Ballet is shortened, drama marches with movement, and music becomes important and cannot be abbreviated. Ballet has a *theme*, which becomes self-evident in the dancing, rather than a *plot*. The music aids in creating the atmosphere: *Sylphides*, the dancing of sylphs in a wood, a picture by Corot, the wonderful transformation of the technical into pure poetry; *Carnaval*, *Commedia delle' arte*, the soul of tragedy and comedy; *Petrouchka*, the first great drama of the new ballet, a drama that contains everything as we watch its progress, and it contains everything just because the story can be told in three or four lines of print, leaving its true meaning to action. At the moment we are concerned with the dramatic element alone. First the *ballerina* is a technical dancer, with one act in which she has a heavy dramatic rôle, about something definite that can therefore be expressed in words (*Giselle*). Next she becomes a "conveyer" of atmosphere, subtle and restrained; mime is no longer conventional and the whole movement of the body becomes mime. The narrative poem gives way to the sonnet. Kurt Jooss, one of the finest of the Central European dancers, said in an interview during 1933 that mime should not be taught apart, as the whole of dancing is mime, a law that he lays down as one of the discoveries of his method. It was, as we shall see, discovered by Fokine in the first decade of this century.

Nijinsky dispenses still more with a set story to give us an analysis of moods: *L'Après Midi d'un Faune*, sensuality; *Jeux*, flirtation; *Sacre du Printemps*, the primitive in man. This is the absolute triumph of the expressiveness of the human body and removes ballet at its farthest from the spoken drama. After Fokine and Nijinsky, and especially in the final Diaghileff period, it finds once again a closer approach to literature, which has now changed from poetry to satire: *The House Party*, *The Blue Train*, the latter no longer a study of flirtation with sport as its setting, but a satire on tennis itself, golf, and the popular Riviera resort. One thing has become certain, such ballets, dealing with the craze of the moment, are soon out of date, while Fokine and Nijinsky created for always.

There is another interesting point, that of

"Ballet realism," a belief in the particular convention of the art. Much of the later Diaghileff ballet was not true to its convention. In *Le Fils Prodigue*, for instance, there is a small low structure, which is indicated to us as a gate early in the ballet. Later it is completely ignored. This is, in fact, as bad as if in a realistic drama a character were to come not through the door, but over the footlights and through "the fourth wall."

I have had many scenarios sent to me, some as detailed as a novel. They are a complete waste of time. As we have seen, the finest ballet may be inspired by a line or two of poetry—

"Je suis le spectre de la rose  
Que tu portais hier au bal."

or from a nursery legend or story. Only the man of letters living in an atmosphere of ballet, and thinking in terms of dancers, has a place in the creation of ballet.

In practice it is difficult to say exactly how a ballet is created, that is to say in what order events occur, as in each case circumstances vary so that it would be difficult for the collaborators themselves always to be sure. In most cases it is definitely the choreographer, who wishes to exploit some particular emotion and who seeks the music, either already in existence or generally to be commissioned. The amazing *L'Après Midi d'un Faune* was almost fully conceived by Nijinsky before the music was found, while *Le Sacre du Printemps* was in the minds of both Nijinsky and Stravinsky simultaneously.

The chance origin of another ballet, Nijinska's *The Blue Train*, is interesting, for the influence of this work persists in all the lighter forms of dancing, although itself it is dated and dead. Jean Cocteau happening to pass by the dressing rooms of a French theatre saw Dolin perform some acrobatics, the unusual and striking feature being the fact that they were performed definitely with a classical "plastique," that is with the movements of a ballet dancer. It is safe, therefore, to say that nearly always *ballet is born with the man who understands movement* and that when we see ballet by X, music by Y, choreography by Z, X's rôle, which is always a little obscure to me, consists generally of little more than saying: "Let us do a Molière ballet" If Mr. X's rôle is any larger, he usually wrecks the whole production.

# HOW TO GIVE YOUR SCHOOL PLAY

By CONSUELO M. DE REYES

*Producer, Little Theatre, Citizen House, Bath, and Everyman Theatre, Hampstead ; Lecturer in Drama, University College, Exeter*

THE word "theatre," derived from the Greek, means "to see" or "to view," and it is essential that this primary necessity should be kept in mind by all those who are adapting halls or institutes for theatres, or who are in process of constructing theatres. Complete vision without strain, discomfort, or the worrying necessity of dodging pillars is the first essential for every member of the audience, and can frequently be obtained, where the auditorium floor is flat and other uses such as drill or assemblies prevent its being permanently raised, by the introduction of a rostrum or rostrums of increasing height at the back of the auditorium on which the chairs are placed. Where the theatre is being designed for theatrical purposes only, the auditorium floor should be built on a good ascending rake so that each row of seats rises well above the other. The Birmingham Repertory Theatre was one of the first to adopt this simplified method of steep raking many years ago, and it remains a model of theatre architecture to this day. In each row the seats should be placed alternately with those in front, as this again greatly facilitates vision. Such simple precautions as these add enormously to the pleasure and comfort of each spectator and do much to enhance the enjoyment of the play.

In modern usage the word "theatre" has also gained a more comprehensive meaning to include both the auditorium for the accommodation of an audience and the stage on which the play is to be performed. These two parts of the building are separated by a wall, in which there is an opening through which the audience hear and see the performance. This opening is called the "proscenium" opening, and it may be closed at will by a curtain. It is also sometimes spoken of as "the fourth wall." Whether you are giving your play in an available hired theatre, or whether you are adapting a room or hall or building a theatre, the following points must be considered.

Are the acoustic properties good? Can the actors make themselves heard in all parts of the auditorium easily and without undue strain or are they obliged to force their voices and bellow? In many West-End theatres, there are bad patches where the play becomes almost inaudible, even among seats such as the stalls, which are close to the stage. Where such defects cannot be overcome by architect or builder, the actors must practise "placing their voices," i.e. throwing them to those particular points, and they must pay the greatest attention to their enunciation. It is an excellent plan for certain players not required for the moment on the scene to post themselves from the earliest rehearsal in these positions and to acquaint those who are on the stage immediately with any failure in sound.

Are the sight lines good? Sight lines are the lines of vision, and they may be represented on the floor plan of a theatre by two lines from each seat, one to each side of the proscenium arch. In a well-constructed theatre the sight lines from each seat should cover the entire stage, so that each member of the audience should be able to see the whole of the action, in whatever part of the stage it may be taking place. How is the theatre equipped? Is the stage sufficiently big to enable all the players to move without a sense of being jostled or cramped? Is there room for them to wait in the wings without their becoming inextricably mixed up with the scenery, or being in the way of those wishing to make important entries? If the wings are small, is there an adjacent passage or green-room within easy reach of the stage in which they can be accommodated? Is the stage high enough for the scenery to be "flown," i.e. to be raised on pulleys out of sight above the stage. This latter point is of enormous convenience, though few Little Theatres or adapted theatres possess it, in which case the scenery has to be taken out and stored at the sides and, consequently, deeper wings are necessary.

Has the theatre an intimate and bright appeal? An eye for colour and a few shillings spent on distemper or even on coloured limewash will quickly effect an improvement. Our own Players frequently delight in decorating both the Bath Little Theatre and the Everyman Theatre, and in working out new colour schemes in which they take the greatest possible delight and pride. Certainly this creative expression, more than anything else, has given them a definite sense of ownership. In the case of the Bath Little Theatre, with a long and somewhat narrow auditorium, cream distemper with a dado of black was found to be the most suitable decoration for the walls. This gave a light effect and the dado preserved the walls from becoming too quickly discoloured. A sense of familiarity and intimacy was gained by placing light prints upon the wall. Care should be taken to see that these are varnished and not framed with glass, as the glass is apt to catch the coloured lights of the stage when the curtain rises, and so distract the audience. An uncompromising corridor outside the Little Theatre was converted into the appearance of a foyer by means of the introduction of lounge chairs, a strip of carpet, photographs of the players, and various stage settings taken after each performance, usually by the players themselves. A competition for the best moment of the play taken by members of the players or of the audience with a half guinea prize will frequently produce excellent and original pictures, and members of the audiences will always find great pleasure in reviving their memories of former productions or in tracing the histrionic growth of individual players. Such a gallery of pictures, obtained at little expense, can, moreover, prove to be an interesting reference library. Frequently we receive calls from far-distant companies that are anxious to obtain practical assistance and photographs, with details of costumes and settings, of plays that we have produced.

We set to work to cover somewhat bleak walls in the Everyman Theatre with a light-grey distemper stippled with silver and relieved with a brilliant vermilion dado. The pictures also are framed in vermilion. This adds a warm touch of colour. The artistic effect of any large surface, such as flats or screens, will be enormously improved by "stippling," which serves to break up

the large flat surfaces, and to produce a surface that is richer and livelier in texture and that responds excellently to lighting.

The method of silver stippling is easy. A sponge is dipped into a big bowl of silver gilt and then squeezed out gradually over the grey background. The more irregularly this action is performed, the better the effect, and, consequently, amateur painters frequently excel at it. We find it a great advantage to have movable shutters, capable of being fully fastened back, fitted to all windows in the auditorium. These work quickly on an iron lever and permit of the room being darkened within a few seconds of the approach of the audience. This ensures a complete airing of the theatres after each performance and during the performances an ample supply of fresh air is conducted up the large opening that is formed between the still open window and the external woodwork of the shutter, placed some inches in front of the window to permit of a large air space, and open at the top. This method has resulted, moreover, in a large economy of electric light consumption during rehearsals, and the entire absence of that enervating sense which is so often experienced when entering a dark, ill-ventilated room.

If your hall does not possess permanent seating and you intend to use loose chairs, the backs of these should all be battened, i.e. secured to a long strip of wood passing along the whole length of their backs, so that the rows are kept absolutely uniform, and in case of emergency or panic, no one chair can be pushed out and cause obstruction and confusion. The provision of gaily coloured cushions will again make for greater attractiveness, and that sense of personal care and welcome which is so essential a quality for the Little Theatre.

Every effort should be made to secure an even heating and to remember that human heating when the audience is present will necessitate a reduction in artificial heating, and that, consequently, the major portion of the heating should be effected before the audience enters, and not at the time of entry or subsequently. There is nothing more depressing or productive of the wrong mood in an audience than to usher the members of it into an ill-heated theatre or room. A second cause of irritability in an audience is usually that they cannot hear. The breaking up of any large expanses of blank wall, especially

if they are opposite one another, usually corrects the difficulty. Curtains may be hung, or the walls may be covered with some material that will deaden reflection. Felt is the material that has the greatest effect in this respect.

Any large room, whether it has a platform or

If a stage, temporary or otherwise, is to be erected, the first and most important consideration is the size and height of the room. A stage that is smaller than fifteen by twenty feet will be severely limited; a larger stage will be better. The stage itself should not take up more than



A SCENE FROM "MIRACLE AT VERDUN," AT THE COMEDY THEATRE, HAYMARKET

A group of the resurrected soldiers of Verdun arrive at a crossroads on their march for home, and lie down to rest. Note the small stage and simple effect of staging created by use of backcloth, side curtains, and a single property, the signpost

not, can be turned into a theatre. If it already has a platform that runs the entire width of the room and at a reasonable depth, so much the better, but a platform can be built if necessary. If there is no platform, and it is impossible to build one, it is better to use central staging in which the play is given in the centre of the hall, the audience being placed in a circle on all sides of the performers. This method is of great antiquity, and it is often productive of excellent effects.

one-third of the room, otherwise there will be little space for the audience. Probably, therefore, it is unwise to turn any room less than twenty feet by fifty feet in size into a theatre. Many ingenious things have been done by organizations with smaller rooms, but it is difficult to do much. Height is another important feature. If the floor of the auditorium is level, the stage should be raised three feet; if it is not so raised the actors will be seen from the first two or three rows only. If the



auditorium is large, four feet, or even four feet six inches, is a better elevation for the stage. The height of the proscenium arch should be at least nine feet, otherwise the actors will appear cramped in proportion. Twelve feet or more is an even better height for the proscenium. Above the proscenium arch there should be a space of at least four or five feet. In a well proportioned theatre there is as much space above the top of the arch as there is below, that is to say the top of the proscenium arch should be half-way between the floor of the stage and the ceiling, so that it is possible to haul scenery up against the ceiling and out of sight. Thus if one allows three feet for the height of the stage, nine feet for the proscenium arch, and five feet for the space above the opening, it will be seen that a room of seventeen feet or more in height is required. Probably few rooms are high enough to allow effect to be given to these details, and if this height is not available it is better to reduce the space above the opening rather than any other dimension. Consequently, if there is a choice of rooms for conversion into a Little Theatre, the room that measures approximately a maximum of twenty feet by fifty by seventeen in height will be the most successful.

If a room of such dimensions is available for use as a permanent theatre, the problem of

building a platform and a proscenium arch is comparatively simple. The room must be divided by a wall into two parts, the smaller of which will contain the stage and the larger one the auditorium. In this wall will be left a large opening, called the proscenium arch. Great care should be taken to see that the stage is solidly built, as nothing is more distracting to players and audience than creaking or shifting boards. The flooring should be of soft wood, so that stage braces may be screwed to the floor with stage screws. Any kind of hard wood will present great difficulties.

The proscenium wall may be built of beams and covered with beaver board, Essex board, or some fire-resisting material. It is still better to have it plastered and finished in the same manner as the auditorium itself. There will then be less distraction to the eye of the audience. If it is desired to outline the proscenium arch in some way, a plain dull black or dark finish will be found more suitable and artistic than the ornate gilt effect that is so often seen in public theatres. Throughout it should be remembered that not only the proscenium arch, but also the whole theatre serves as the frame to the picture, the purpose of which is to direct the eye to the beauty, rhythm, and movement of the stage picture within.



# THE SECRETARY AND HIS WORK

By H. P. HOLLINGDRAKE

*Hon. Secretary, Bolton Operatic Society ; Life Member of the Council of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association*

THE secretary is the most important official in a well-ordered amateur society, and, whether paid or unpaid, he ranks in responsibility equally with the producer.

That this is not yet generally realized is proved by the frequency with which societies announce a change of secretary. The obvious and not unfair inference, after making all allowances for unforeseen difficulties, is that secretarial appointments are far too lightly made and given to men of no outstanding qualifications for the position, with the result that each year there are many resignations from those who have discovered the real nature of the task that is allotted to them.

The ideal secretary is a born organizer; cool, clear-headed, and methodical in all his work; one whose instinct in a critical or difficult situation instantly senses the "next best thing" to be done and restores order out of incipient chaos. He must know something of ordinary business methods and office routine, be able to conduct the society's correspondence in clear and grammatical English, and record the proceedings at committee meetings in his minute book. In addition, he should have tact, courtesy without servility, and an innate and constant love for his work and the society he serves.

There are such secretaries up and down the country; quiet men working unobtrusively, but splendidly, for sheer love of their hobby. Hence, it is difficult to be sympathetic towards societies with troubles that are largely of their own making through the selection of the wrong type of person as their principal and most responsible officer. Further, it may reasonably be suspected that the appointment of men who are either incompetent or unwilling to undertake the whole of the secretarial duties is the reason why those duties in many societies are subdivided amongst a number of semi-officials with impressive titles. If there is one officer whose value to his society increases in proportion to his length of service it is surely the secretary, and there can be no gain,

but definite loss, by replacements every two or three years.

Let the selection of the secretary, therefore, be made with the greatest possible care and understanding, for upon it will depend the smooth working and a good deal of the success of the society's affairs. Select, if possible, a man who has ample leisure, no other serious hobby, and his own office staff.

In the hope that they may be found useful by those who are in the earlier stages of their secretarial career a few notes—gleanings from a long experience—are offered.

The secretary should remember that he is the official spokesman or mouthpiece of the society, and that he owes his position to the acting members in annual meeting, but derives his authority from the committee. He has a duty to both. He is not the servant of the committee, but its representative, through whom it acts, issues orders, and controls the affairs of the society.

All official letters, therefore, on behalf of the society should be signed by the secretary, and should be worded, "I am authorized (or directed) by the committee to . . ." A secretary will do well not to sign important letters unless or until he has the authority of the committee to do so. Copies of all letters, however unimportant they may appear to be, should be made and filed. The official notepaper should be post 4to, size 10 in.  $\times$  8 in., with square envelopes to match,  $5\frac{1}{4}$  in.  $\times$   $4\frac{1}{4}$  in., the letter being folded twice only. The heading should be neatly set out, with the name of the society in plain bold type and other matter in smaller sizes of the same fount. The name of the secretary and his address for correspondence should be prominent.

A sound system of filing letters should be adopted and maintained. Unfiled correspondence should not be allowed to accumulate. At the end of each season it is a great advantage to re-sort the letters for final storage under subject headings, and to number and index them for easy reference.

A loose leaf minute book with numbered pages is better than a bound book. Minutes should be numbered and indexed.

In recording minutes scrupulous accuracy is required, as much may depend subsequently upon the actual wording of a resolution in the minute book, and an ambiguous phrase may have awkward consequences. Minutes should not be elaborated into a *précis* of the arguments and discussions at a committee meeting, but in important or controversial matters a short summary of the debate may, with advantage, be recorded.

The following skeleton will serve as a guide—

Minutes of a Committee Meeting  
held at.....on.....the.....of.....  
193 .

PRESENT: Mr. A. B. in the Chair; Messrs. C. D.,  
E. F., G. H.

MINUTES: (1) The Minutes of the last Committee Meeting were read, approved, and signed.

CORRESPOND-

ENCE: (2) (a) Read letter from Messrs. X, & Co., submitting samples of cheap printing.

RESOLVED: That the offer be not entertained; and, further, that all orders for printing shall be placed, as far as possible, with local firms.

(b) Read Secretary's reply to Messrs. Y. Z. & Co. as instructed under Minute 10 of the previous Meeting.

RESOLVED: That the reply be approved.

THEATRE

RENT: (3) The Secretary reported his interview with Mr. M. with regard to the rent of the Frivolity Theatre, and that a renewal of the previous contract was offered.

RESOLVED: That the Secretary be empowered to accept the offer and to sign the appropriate contract.

Make a habit of reading *all* correspondence, both letters received and those sent out, at committee meetings. The secretary writes in the name and at the direction of his colleagues, and

it is courteous to let them hear how their instructions have been carried out. It also has a stimulating effect on the secretary's prose style.

A reputation for promptitude in replying to correspondence should be earned. Any person who has taken the trouble to write is entitled to the courtesy of an acknowledgment, if an immediate and complete reply is impossible; just as a secretary has the right to expect an acknowledgment of any information or assistance he has been able to give to another society. The secretary who pleads that he has not had time to write or type a three-line postcard will not be a great success.

In a large society where there are many subscribers in addition to acting members it is desirable for the secretary to have a supply of stock printed postcards to enable him to deal promptly with routine matters that do not require personal letters, such as notices of committee meetings, acknowledgments of applications for auditions, changes of address or resignations. A useful card for the last two is worded—

"I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, and to state that your instructions have been carried out.

.....

Hon. Secretary."

This wording discloses nothing to the curious, and is a courteous and sufficient reply.

I have given merely an outline of a secretary's duties: many details must be left to suggest themselves, but the underlying principle is the same, whether the society be small or large. The aim of every secretary should be to be known as "the man who never forgets anything." He should keep a memorandum book and whenever a relevant thought occurs to him, jot it down at once.

Finally, *all documents* should be dated.





MISS FLORA ROBSON

*Photo by Elisabeth Ivimey*

# ACTING IN NATURALISTIC DRAMA

By FLORA ROBSON

HOW many times when one has been watching the performance of a naturalistic action has one heard a member of the audience say, "But that is not acting, he is just being himself!" This may be a tribute to the actor's particular style, but it is not a true statement; he is, in reality, giving a highly finished performance, every movement and intonation of which is thought out to the last detail.

The most important fact to make clear is that the actor is never being spontaneous or natural; he only *appears* to be. In ordinary life you do not know what you are going to say next, whereas on the stage you do, but you must make it appear spontaneous. However normal and everydayish the dialogue reads in a modern play, immediately the actor has learned the words, it ceases to be natural to him. Also, he may be required to talk natural conversation, but he is in a vast theatre, and he must make his voice heard at the back of the gallery without appearing to be shouting or over-acting. To give the effect of naturalness, he must spend infinite trouble trying different tones and expressions for a single word or short sentence.

Your first task on reading a play is to see your part as a whole before you attend to details, and to see it in relation to the other characters. Imagine the play as a symphony. You must determine when your character is the solo instrument and when it is part of the harmony. This is a great help to the producer, who is in the place of a conductor.

If you are the solo instrument, you must claim and hold the attention of the audience and make the members of it focus on you. But it is important, if you are part of the harmony, that you should help to focus the audience's attention on to the central character by listening carefully, and by not distracting their attention.

Take a scene between two people. Sometimes both characters are of equal importance; then the speaker and the reactions of each are important, and the scene is more or less straightforward; but in a scene where one actor

is relating something at length, and the other has short interpolations (which are not important except to help to carry the narrative along), then the second actor should subordinate himself by making his reactions slight, by listening and watching, and by slipping in his interpolations quickly on his cues. He can thus avoid distracting, and can help to focus the attention of the audience in the right place. I cannot stress sufficiently the importance of listening to, and looking at, the person who is speaking to you. It helps the audience to listen, and also it helps the other actor enormously—he immediately acts *to* you (instead of *at* you and *to* the audience), which makes for naturalism—and you are always "in" the scene.

Study your part as a whole; study it for contrast. Just as an artist can more easily get his effect by means of a contrasting background, which throws his subject into clear relief, so a dramatist heightens the effect of his scenes by contrasting one scene with another. Bring out these contrasts, and by means of them work up to your big scene, always keeping something in reserve for this climax.

Remember, when you are working out the character of your part, that no person is perfect. The day of the pure white heroine and the coal-black villain passed with the Victorian melodramas. Your part will appear much more naturalistic if it has human faults mixed up in your interpretation; I mean, of course, where the text suggests it, but to make the character just pretty takes away its human values.

It is so important that, whatever part you play, you should understand it and sympathize with it, even if the part is of the blackest villain; but when you play it do not spare its worst characteristics, and above all, do not sentimentalize it.

When you have realized your part as a whole, *learn your words*. This sounds elementary advice, but it is vital to a producer. Some actors think that to know their words by the last week before production is good work, but, believe me, the work does not begin till everyone is word perfect!

You must also know what the other actors have to say. If you are busily listening for a cue, there is no by-play between the characters.

Secondly, when you learn your part, do not make the mistake of stressing too many words in a sentence. Particularly, when you have a phrase that has an obscure or involved meaning, if you speak too slowly and underline too many words in an effort to explain it, it becomes almost unintelligible.

The fewer words you stress, the simpler and more natural your words will become.

Thirdly, vary your pace a great deal. Sometimes, race your words, so that an important line stands out in comparison when it is said slowly and weightily. Also, vary your intonations and inflections. When I first learn words aloud, I listen to myself and often find that every line has the same inflection, and very dull it sounds! Cultivate listening to your own voice in private, but *never* listen to yourself on the stage.

In emotional acting, the great pitfall to avoid is to shock or surprise your audience suddenly. If you do not prepare them for an onslaught on their feelings, they will laugh.

I need only say a word about gestures, because in naturalistic plays they are very natural and simple, only they must be neat and slick; don't fumble! Rehearse with your properties wherever possible.

In studying a part, I think it should be conceived objectively, and then played subjectively.

I read the play, and I do not read myself into the part. I see her as the character in the play, or often I connect her with someone in real life who is similar; and occasionally she is a creature of imagination, made up of experiences of chance meetings or from books.

If you observe someone going through an emotional strain you may see certain outward signs; one stiffens about the shoulders, another opens and closes his hands, or his throat muscles contract. These are useful things to notice and copy, but unless you realize the mental agony and are able to understand the emotions that cause

these outward signs, your performance will lack its most essential quality.

One of the most important attributes in naturalistic acting is that of seeming to be unconscious of anybody watching or listening. In intimate scenes this gives members of the audience the feeling that they are listening to people who have been left alone together. I quote from a letter of Antoine's criticizing a realistic play by Becque; it had been played by actors in the "rhetorical, high-flown style of old plays." (This quotation is from M. Komisarjevsky's book *Myself and the Theatre*.)

"The important thing in the new Theatre is the total absence of self-consciousness on the part of the characters, as in real life, where people are not forever conscious of what they are saying or doing. Last night we merely saw so many actors strutting and reciting, instead of the people created by Becque. . . ."

"Not once did the players look at each other while speaking. In real life you would say: Look at me, damn you! It is to you that I am speaking—to anyone whom you were addressing who behaved as they did. . . ."

In the same letter he says that once when rehearsing a play he could not make an actor even move across the stage towards a table and sit in an armchair without glancing at the auditorium, or striking a special attitude. "I must admit," says he, "that the actor knew his job, but he had lost his simplicity and was incapable of acting as if no one were looking at him. . . . For actors who are tied to the old tradition the stage is a sort of tribune, and not an enclosed spot where something happens."

This reference to "an enclosed spot" inevitably brings up the question of the "fourth wall." I am rather against the theory the application of which makes actors self-consciously turn their backs on the audience, and avoid looking "out." I believe that as long as you are thinking the thoughts of your character, you can look right into the auditorium without looking *at* the audience.

Flora Robson

# PRODUCING NATURALISTIC DRAMA

By C. B. PURDOM

*Author of "Producing Plays," etc.; Dramatic Critic; Founder of Letchworth Players and Welwyn Garden City Theatre; Hon. Treasurer, National Festival of Community Drama; Editor of "New Britain"*

I PROPOSE to write a series of five contributions on the production of five types of plays, Naturalistic, Farce, Comedy, Romance, and Tragedy, showing the application of the general principles outlined in my first article on Production.

There are two main forms of plays—Comedy and Tragedy. The three other forms are variations of them. Between, there is an endless variety of combinations of forms such as Farcical-Comedy, Tragi-Comedy, and so forth. I shall touch upon them in the course of what I shall write. It is important to know to what form any particular play belongs, for the method of production depends upon its form. Comedy has a different form from Tragedy, and must be handled differently. Many mistakes in production arise from uncertainty as to a play's true form, converting comedy into farce, or vice versa, or romance into comedy. Clear definition in production depends upon understanding of form.

Naturalistic drama is elementary drama, drama in its simplest form, because it is nearest to common life. It is the easiest form of drama because it is so familiar. The dramatist goes into the street, or into the slums, or stays in his own home, and writes down what he observes. The Manchester School of Drama, which had an honourable career at Miss Horniman's Repertory Theatre (1907-1916), was naturalistic; its chief writers were Stanley Houghton, Harold Brighouse, Allan Monkhouse, and Charles McEvoy, the characters being lower middle class or working people.

The origin of the modern drama is in naturalism. T. W. Robertson's *Caste* (1865) was the first important naturalistic play in England; Pinero was naturalistic; so are Shaw and Galsworthy. The Irish dramatists apart from W. B. Yeats are naturalistic. Ibsen, Björnson, Hauptmann, Sudermann, Wedekind, Strindberg, Maxim Gorky, Tchekhov, Brieux, and Eugene O'Neill,

are all naturalistic. The attempt to make the theatre real has made fresh naturalism in every country, and accompanied the desire to improve social conditions. The part played by ideas of social reform in reconstituting the modern theatre is a subject worthy of study.

What the naturalistic writers sought to do was to put real life, individual, social, and political, upon the stage. They wanted the actual problems of the time to be considered. Therefore they took the people they knew in the situations into which they were familiar and made plays out of them. When these plays came to be performed they had to be acted differently from the artificial, stagey plays with which the actors were familiar. A new method of acting and stage production had to be developed. The Bancrofts became the pioneers of this new method when they produced Robertson's plays in the sixties of last century. Their influence grew steadily, but it was not until the opening of the present century that any real progress in naturalistic acting took place in this country, though Eleanora Duse (1858-1924) had been a great exponent of it in Italy, and Constantin Stanislavsky had practised it in Russia since 1888.

Harley Granville-Barker in the Vedrenne-Barker season at the Court Theatre (1904-1907) set the standard of English naturalistic production. His work in those brief years has not been surpassed by any other producer, and it is still fruitful in the English theatre. Mr. Granville-Barker is without question the greatest English theatrical producer of modern times, and the fact that he has done nothing in the theatre since 1920 (though he has since written and translated many plays) has been a grievous loss to the English stage. He is essentially a naturalistic producer, paying attention to reality, building up his results from minute detail, and studying the actual rhythm of life.

Mr. Granville-Barker is an example of the

naturalistic dramatist who is a true artist because he passes through naturalism to imagination. The high-water mark of his work as producer was the three Shakespearean productions at the Savoy Theatre in 1912 and 1914. These were not naturalistic but poetic. No dramatist, actor, or producer who possesses greatness is merely

contributions. What is required is straightforward playing, effortless and sincere, and staging that is modelled on life. That is the beginning, and nearly everybody can do it.

But that must not be thought to be the end of naturalistic drama. The beginning of art is to do what is nearest, but the end is to aim at the un-



*Scott & Wilkinson, Cambridge*

"ADAM THE CREATOR" AT THE CAMBRIDGE FESTIVAL THEATRE  
Example of Expressionist Treatment of a Naturalistic Play

naturalistic—for example, Ibsen, Strindberg, Tchekhov, Shaw, Duse, Stanislavsky, and Granville-Barker. I repeat that naturalistic drama is elementary drama; but elementary art must be mastered before great art begins.

Amateurs find naturalistic plays the easiest to do: they *are* the easiest. And it is right that they should start with them, because they start on familiar ground. To put the life they know on the stage is what amateurs can do with the least difficulty, and they should do it. It is right to start by being oneself. I encourage amateurs to do this form of play, for I would sooner see them do it than attempt to perform Shakespeare—though Shakespeare is necessary, as I shall show in later

attainable. So in naturalistic plays we ask first for sincerity and real life; but we soon ask for something more. The actor starts by being himself, but he must end by surpassing himself. Therefore, it must not be thought that there is no technique required for naturalistic plays or no creative imagination. The most perfect art is demanded. In fact, unless the actor in naturalistic plays quickly drops "being himself," he will degenerate and become, if successful, not an actor but a mimic—that is a caricature of an actor; and, if unsuccessful, he will be a mere bore. The naturalistic actor must acquire art.

The naturalistic drama holds the mirror up to Nature; but the truth is that it does not give an





THE FIRST PERFORMANCE BY ENGLISH ACTORS OF BERNARD SHAW'S "THE SHOWING UP OF BLANCO POSNIT" BY THE LITCHWORTH PLAYERS (1916)



"THE COFFIN" PERFORMED AT THE WELWYN THEATRE BY THE WELWYN GARDEN CITY THEATRE SOCIETY, PRODUCED BY MR. C. B. PURDOM

imitation of life, but a representation, or interpretation of it. It is not real life we see on the stage, but play: something that seems like real life, but actually is not. The producer must remember, therefore, that his task is not to imitate life in acting or staging but to give the illusion of life.

Suppose, for example, the producer were to get a real out-of-work, a real charwoman, and a real Liberal Member of Parliament, and put them on the stage to perform Galsworthy's *The Silver Box*; could they do it? Almost certainly not; and even if by chance they were able to give a tolerable performance, actors playing the parts would make the real persons seem unconvincing. Real life and real characters moved bodily on to the stage would be uninteresting, for they would seem less than life. The actor has to make them more than life to appear real. There is no getting away from art.

What the producer of naturalistic plays has to do is to study life and then recreate it for the stage. The late Charles Hawtrey was one of the most natural actors who ever walked the London stage. Everything he did seemed spontaneous—he was so easy, so unaffected, so smooth and at home. Yet he rehearsed every movement. Every detail of his playing was artificial. He left nothing to the moment—all was prepared. He was an artist.

In naturalistic plays everything must seem to arise out of the plain necessity of the action. There must be no obvious preparation. The players must come on, move, speak, and maintain such relations with each other that everything seems inevitable and effortless. All consciousness of the audience must be removed. The playing must be kept well within the scene. The rhythm of the play must have the apparent flow of Nature. The diction must be that of the speech of the actual type of character represented. Accuracy of speech is the first rule. If a dialect play is done it must be rendered in the correct dialect. If that is not exactly known dialect should not be attempted. Do not let English actors try to speak American: very few can do it, hardly any unless they know America. The same with Scots speech.

The dresses and properties must be accurate, and the staging must be right in detail. But do not over-elaborate. If you are putting a cottage kitchen on the stage do not attempt to get into

the scene everything that you know can be found in such a kitchen: to do that would be to spoil the effect, not to heighten it. Suggest the kitchen: that is all that is necessary. The rule is to use the minimum of materials and to rely upon suggestion. But let what you have be correct—the furniture, doors, fireplace, windows and all the fittings, ornaments, and pictures used must have the appearance of reality. If the real thing is practicable, use it instead of an imitation. Do not be slipshod.

The danger of naturalistic plays is that those concerned may think that anything will do—any sort of acting and any makeshift in staging. That is to bring the stage into contempt. To avoid that pitfall, remember that in naturalistic plays as in all others the actor makes or mars the production, and that there is no limit to the art that can be employed. Naturalism is only the outer form of the play—the inner spirit is the same as for the greatest drama. Let the actor know that he must act for all he is worth. His deepest spirit must be engaged in what he does.

Small theatres are best for naturalistic drama. If the actor has to exert himself to capture the attention of a large audience his attempt to be natural cannot be easily maintained. The naturalistic drama is essentially intimate. It is a pleasant form of playing and interesting above everything for the producer. It is small art, but very agreeable.

The limitations of naturalistic drama—and they are severe—has brought the dramatist and producer into extremes of expressionism in the attempt to remove them. Georg Kaiser's *From Morn to Midnight* is an example of this, and Elmer Rice's *The Adding Machine*. In these plays the naturalistic element is conventionalized so that it is made deliberately unreal. Continental stagecraft before the War and more particularly since raised naturalism to such a point of unreality that the drama was overcome by mere staging. Thus naturalism killed itself.

If, however, the limits of naturalistic drama are observed, it is a good starting place for the actor and producer. Indeed, I go so far as to say that until naturalistic acting is mastered the actor will not get far. The reason is that it originates in life.

## ADAPTING SETS TO CIRCUMSTANCE

By HAL D. STEWART

*Author of "Rizzio's Boots," "The Blind Eye," etc.*

ARTISTS are often idealists. They have the reputation of being rather unpractical, of being too immersed in the poetry of their art to trouble much about mundane, everyday matters. This may or may not be the case,

but the amateur more closely than the professional, because there are certain facilities that one may assume to be present in any commercial theatre, while, in an amateur production, it is never safe to assume that there will be any facilities at all!

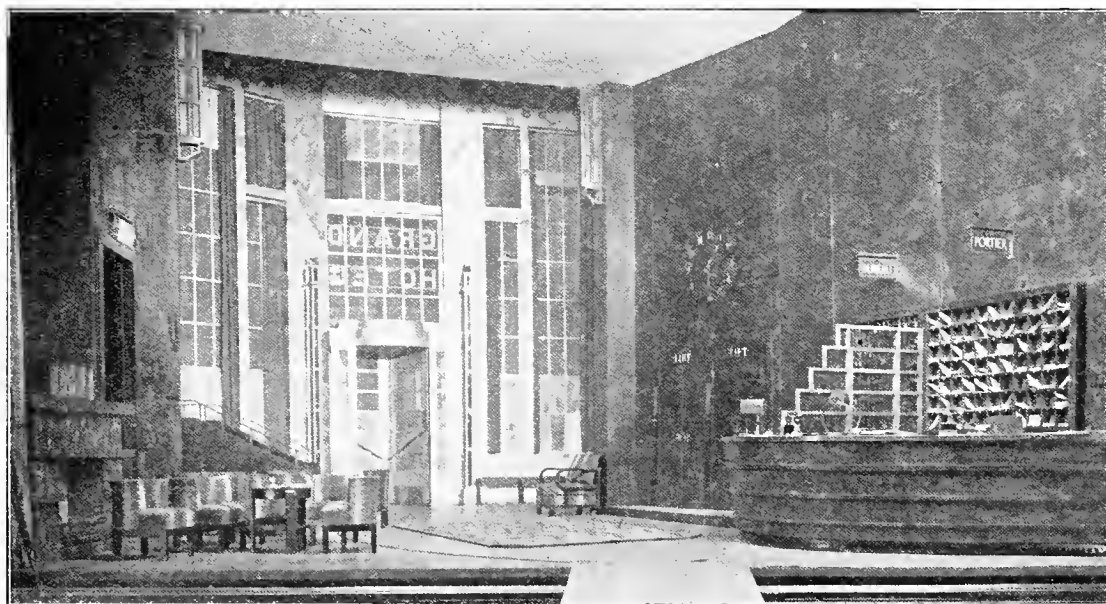


FIG. 1. THE LONDON PRODUCTION OF "GRAND HOTEL"  
The Entrance Hall

*The Stage Photo Co.*

but it is essential that the artist in the theatre should be severely practical.

It is a waste of time to draw designs, however beautiful, if they cannot be realized in practice. The stage designer should be able not only to design scenery, but also to give practical suggestions as to how his design is to be carried out on the stage. It follows, therefore, that he must be thoroughly conversant with the working of a production. He must know what can, and what cannot, be done in the theatre where his design is to be used. This principle applies generally throughout the theatre, but it concerns the ama-

A setting that depends for effect on the careful placing of floods and spots, and skilfully balanced lighting, will be of little use to a society that gives a production in a hall where the sole means of illumination is oil lamps. Nor is this illustration by any means far-fetched. There are many halls in which electric light has not been installed.

The problems of setting and striking the set, of storing scenery and furniture, and of off-stage room must always be kept in mind. A set which is to be used throughout the evening, and a set which is only one of several in a production, present the designer with different problems. The

first is a comparatively simple matter. If a set has to stand throughout a production it can be solidly built, and any amount of refinement and elaboration can be introduced. If the set has to be struck, or set, or both, during the play, the case is different, because the time that it will take to set and strike the scenery must be remembered. This

cession of short scenes—presents rather an acute problem to most amateur groups. In such plays the designer must use all his ingenuity to evolve sets that can be set and struck with great rapidity.

Figs. 1-2 show settings used in the original production of *Grand Hotel* at the Adelphi Theatre. In this play there are many elaborate

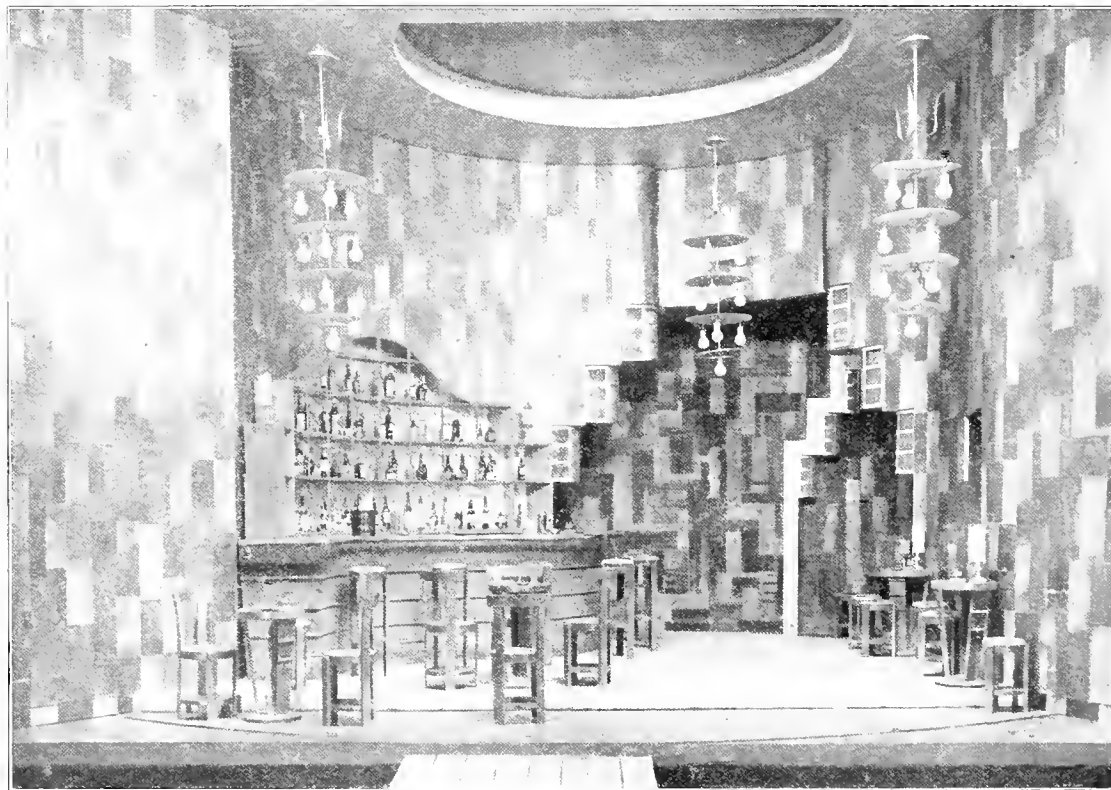


FIG. 2. THE LONDON PRODUCTION OF "GRAND HOTEL"

The Cocktail Bar

The Stage Photo Co.

becomes even more important when changes have to be made during an act. Most changes, unless elaborate or difficult scenery is concerned, can be made in an interval of twelve minutes, provided that there is an efficient stage staff. Twelve minutes is not an unusual interval between acts, and this may even be slightly prolonged. When the acts are split up into several scenes, however, intervals of about this length are out of the question, except at the end of an act, and the modern tendency in playwriting—towards a cinematograph technique employing a long suc-

scenes, which take time to erect, even with a professional stage staff. The play was produced, however, on a revolving stage, and thus there were no waits between the scenes, the stage simply being turned to the required point, and fresh sets being erected while other scenes were being played.

When Komisarjevsky produced this play for the Masque Theatre he had no revolving stage, and as the production was toured in a number of different theatres the elaborate sets used in London would have been impracticable.

Fig. 3 shows how the difficulty was overcome. This one permanent setting was used throughout. It was set well back from the front tabs, and another set of black velvet curtains was used immediately in front of the set. One of these was drawn to the central pillar when only half of the stage was in use. When only the set above the

nothing by reason of the less elaborate scenery. In fact, it is possible that in many ways the play gained by the simplicity of set. The point that is of interest to the amateur, however, is that the less elaborate setting is much less costly, and something on these lines is often possible in amateur productions.



Photo by Gutterburg, Ltd., Manchester

FIG. 3. KOMISARJEVSKY'S SET FOR HIS PRODUCTION OF "GRAND HOTEL" FOR THE MASQUE THEATRE

bedroom was being used it was lit, and the bedroom was blacked out. Similarly, when the bedroom was in use, the set on the rostrum was kept in darkness. Several scenes, including the cocktail bar scene, were played in front of the black curtains, under a spot light, with the properties necessary to indicate the scene. These were most effective in spite of the fact that no scenery was used.

Both these productions of *Grand Hotel* were excellent and Komisarjevsky's production lost

Elaborate, built-up rostrums such as were used in this particular instance may be beyond the resources of most societies, and their use presupposes a fairly large stage, but it is often possible to evolve something on similar lines, where the stage is divided, and where lighting and properties are relied on for effect rather than scenery. Moreover, it should be remembered that scenery such as was used in the London production of this play must be very good indeed. If you set out to give an exact reproduction it must be exact. Attention in

this case is inevitably drawn to the scenery, and the audience is apt to look for faults that would not trouble them in less pretentious productions.

In some cases naturalistic scenery is necessary to the play. Komisarjevsky also produced for the Masque Theatre Edward Knoblock's dramatization of Cronin's novel—*Hatter's Castle*. He again used the same type of permanent set that he used in *Grand Hotel* and in this case the effect was less satisfactory. *Hatter's Castle* is a somewhat melodramatic play about a middle class family. The scene is laid in a small Scottish town towards the end of last century. In my opinion, it is a play that definitely demands naturalistic scenery, and the effect was spoiled for me by the bizarre nature of the set that was used.

It is most important to remember that when the setting is impressionistic rather than realistic lighting plays an important part. An even glare of white light may rob the most carefully designed set of all its charm and interest, while soft and studied lighting will often make a poor set attractive.

When quick changes of scenery are unavoidable, remember that weight is an important factor. Do not use flats that are sixteen feet in height if fourteen feet will do. It may often be necessary to sacrifice some feature that you would like to incorporate in your design because it is unwieldy and difficult to handle.

The designer should always be able to say how the problems of scene shifting that he presents can be overcome. If he is thoroughly conversant with the stage his ingenuity will usually be equal to the occasion. Each different problem must be met as it arises. It is impossible to lay down any rules.

Apart from the actual scenery, furniture and properties are important factors when a change is being made. It frequently happens that a scene

is set, but that the curtain cannot rise because all the furniture is not in position. Where quick changes are essential, the amount of furniture on the stage should be reduced, both in the number of pieces and their weight, as far as is practicable.

When a society is in the habit of producing new plays by new authors, as is often the case, the designer should remember that it is common for inexperienced dramatists to write plays that are quite impracticable to stage. Often a slight alteration to the script will make the designer's work a great deal easier and enable him to produce a more satisfactory result. This must be pointed out to the producer so that he may try to persuade the author to modify his play. This is not always easy.

There is one other most important point that must be remembered. The whole scene must, as far as possible, be visible from every part of the auditorium. It is, of course, sometimes a physical impossibility to attain this ideal owing to the structure of the building, but every effort should be made to realize attainment. In any case, the designer should ensure that all important features, and places where important action will take place, will be seen by the whole audience.

Most commercial theatres have two painted lines, running back at an angle from the corners of the proscenium arch, on the stage. These indicate what is called the line of sight; that is, they mark the boundaries of that portion of the stage which is visible to the whole house. To have these lines is helpful, because by their aid it can be seen at a glance when a flat is being set whether or not it will be visible. Unfortunately these lines cannot always be depended upon.

Because of the line of sight the side walls of a set are normally set at an obtuse angle to the back wall, and not at right angles to it, as would be the case in an ordinary room.



## THE AUTHOR'S INTENTION

By F. E. DORAN

*Secretary, Manchester Playgoers' Club*

THE producer who knows his job, whatever may be his height of brow, the producer (whether of farce, Greek tragedy, modern comedy, no matter what the medium may be) sees that every ounce of content is brought to the attention of the audience, and to every individual member of that audience. For want of a better phrase let us call that content "the author's intention." What did the author mean at this or that point? What does *this* bear in relation to *that*? and above all, what relation does *this* and *that* bear to the other? I will illustrate this by recalling two experiences. I saw Edyth Goodall in her famous performance of Clare in John Galsworthy's *The Fugitive*. The part is that of a highly sensitive nature, repelled by the smug complacency of her solid husband. She is attracted by the volatility of an artist, who is not too fine in his moral thinking. Her relations with him are purely platonic, but her husband, as a smug husband would, thinks otherwise, and after a volcanic scene the wife seeks the protection of the artist. The rest of the play shows her sensitiveness in continual retreat from life, until sheer physical desperation forces her to attempt the attractions of her charms in a public restaurant. But the vulgarities of the men who approach offend more than ever, and she, the fugitive, flies from everything—by poison. This is an incomprehensive survey of the play, but sufficient for my purpose, which is to recall the sensitive "retreating" of Edyth Goodall. It must be remembered that this is the big part. Husband, artist, philanderers, are only adjuncts to the prime theme, the impact of the commonplace on a highly sensitized nature, and that nature driven to destruction by inability to cope with coarse-fibred circumstance and people. Now I also saw a certain actress attempt this part elsewhere. She was altogether different, and the play was ruined. This actress saw it as a star part, all lead, on every scene, with a smashing death end. Being brunette—dark, a foreign type, with a strong face, and

figure—she smashed and crashed through the fine texture of the piece until her grand death bit, which pulled round after round of applause from an audience goaded into excitement by the storm troops technique of this most efficient but wilfully misunderstanding actress. She was a craftsman, but no artist. Now, here is one play, two interpretations. Both satisfied the audiences. One was a comment on character and motives, the other barnstorming acting of the old type. The result of the second performance was to ruin the author's intention towards his audience. Galsworthy did not intend the producer, in this case one with professional repertory experience, to give us a highly charged display of frustrated femininity; consequently no matter how good all the other details of production may have been, the artistic result was unutterably bad because the author's intention had been ignored to give way to a busker's holiday.

The second instance was the case of two *Hanky Panky John* productions. This play is a comedy of human nature, in which a missing note at a house party leads to the guests self-accusing themselves to protect somebody else. It turns out to have been stolen by the host himself to test the loyalty of his guests. In the last act, a temporary butler appears and has some good lines to say, but his appearance and words have little to do with the main theme except to act as comic embellishment. The first and professional production put the butler in his right place, but the second, done by a first-class amateur group, under a producer of reputation, was a fiasco as far as the theme was concerned, but a riot of laughter whenever the butler was on. The whole fabric of the play was destroyed, the night became a vaudeville with the butler top of the bill, simply because the producer had not checked or toned down the really marvellous comic personality of the butler. The subtle shades of comedy that had gone before were drowned by this great sunshine burst of comedy, and though the audience had a

good laugh, they had not seen *Hanky Panky John*.

These two cases of what we saw and heard demonstrate the power of the producer, and though I appear to stress the point, I do so because I write as one in the stalls. When I go to see a Galsworthy play I want the Galsworthy intention, and if I go to see a modern comedy, I do not want vaudeville. So to come



FIG. 1

back to basic points, the actor is a producer's first and foremost tool, which the producer must learn to use and apply.

The recognition of this principle of the author's intention is one that cannot be too highly emphasized. It is the whole keynote of everything that arises from a play. If not thoroughly understood and applied the whole art of the theatre falls to the ground and the art of production becomes a sort of false pretences in the theatre. When the author allowed the actor to use him as a stalking horse in the days of the early nineteenth century

the theatre sank to its lowest ebb. When Colley Cibber "adapted" (save the mark!) Shakespeare at the end of the eighteenth century, we gained nothing by losing Shakespeare and getting Cibber.

A producer must be most careful in analysing the play and getting right down to a basis of complete accord with the purpose of the play, and then "producing" his actors, lighting, and scenery accordingly.

These important factors, the "mood" of the play, the "tempo," and the "colour," all have to be in harmony, interdependent, and inter-related. Sometimes there is a real problem of interpretation to be solved, and this often arises when a classic play is being revived.

A good example of this is the old "Morality" play *Everyman*, which has cropped up quite a lot since it was translated from the Dutch in the Middle Ages. This play takes us to the very root of the principle I am seeking to establish and also offers us a neat little problem, together with an example of how exciting play production can become. It is, of course, general knowledge that the origins of the theatre in this country were religious. The early drama consisted of acted sermons or lessons, which were performed to bring home to the people, in simple but emphatic fashion, the stories in the Bible. Later on these plays took on a more abstract form with a moral point attached. First a simple story of Bethlehem with Mary and Joseph, the Kings and Shepherds, and so on, was used, but subsequently the field was enlarged, and the Virtues and Vices, Good and Evil, and such like, were impersonated, and a "Morality" play built up to testify to certain religious teachings. *Everyman* is in this category, and a producer handling this play must make up his mind that it is propaganda for religion. But a perplexing point will arise that he will solve according to temperament and faith. The gist of the play, or its scenario, may be expressed by saying that Mr. Everyman, while in full possession of health, wealth, and friends, is suddenly met by Death, who is sent by God to summon Everyman to his account. But Everyman is not particularly upset—at first. Surely his friends, and his riches, and his kinspeople will come with him on the journey and make it light. But one by one they say no, most emphatically too. Then Everyman begins to think, for he finds himself alone but as yet



unafraid. He remembers some Good Deeds, so calls on them, but alas, "so weak I can hardly stand." Still Good Deeds are alive and, while there is life there is hope, calls to his aid his own resources, his Five Wits of sound, sight, feel, smell, and hearing, his Strength, his Beauty, and asks for their assistance, but come with him they will not. So he goes to Confession and does Penance, which revives his Good Deeds and when Death comes he is not so lonely. But die he must and does.

When that great artist of the theatre, William Poel, produced *Everyman* some years ago, before the War, he interpreted the play as a *grim* morality, a warning, with Death a grisly skeleton making a terrifying alarm with his wooden clapper. Death the Terrible. The effect on the audience is historic. People fainted and the moral lesson was so forced home that it was the talk of London. Sermons were preached on the imminence of Death, and the production generally raised a furore.

There is another interpretation, equally sound but entirely different. Remember that the play is propagandist, according to doctrines of the Church of the Middle Ages. True repentance and Penitence make of Death the Gateway to Heaven, and there is no reason why the producer should not work his play up to a happy ending. The one interpretation is as justifiable as the other. Penance has cleansed him, his Good Deeds appear strong and healthy, and he is prepared to go to his "accmpt." But to arrive at this idea of the play asks for an understanding of the Middle Ages and leads to all sorts of speculations and inquiries. Such a play justifies the claim of the theatre to be an educative force, but ideas must go to its production, otherwise it will be as dull as ditchwater.

I quote this two-interpretation play of *Everyman* as an example of the producer's problem as distinct from the actor's problem. The producer defines the course, and the actor contributes his share by acting accordingly. The producer is in contact with the author's mind and directs the actors in relation to plan.

All plays worth their salt have this "author's intention" in them. Whether it be uproarious farce or the most intense tragedy, to be a good play the author must have had a nuclear idea which he wished presented in a certain way, and

any method of production or acting which obscures that nucleus is bad acting or bad production.

There has been a tendency in recent years for producers to say, metaphorically, "Now here's a pretty thing, watch what I do with this pretty thing," and before we know where we are, chromium steel, revolving shutters, coloured lights or no lights at all, groupings and silhouettes are shown to us, and we are expected to grovel in



FIG. 2

worship. Sometimes we rightly grovel, but usually it is charlatanry, a craze for something merely different, and sometimes frankly sensational. But difference and sensationalism are only parts of the whole, and if integral beauty is destroyed or the sensation is so pronounced that the author's idea is overlaid, then we have seen the wrong thing.

It may be commented that I put too much responsibility on the producer. I retort that too many people claim to be producers and do not know what their responsibilities are. A play, particularly a good play, is too precious a thing to be

mauled about by insufficient understanding, and play production is too important to be tackled by the inefficient. It is more than mere positions of actors and the placing of furniture. It is also the presentation of a case, sometimes a complex case, and each part must be balanced and correctly adjusted in relation to the whole. Particularly does this apply to modern drama, in which nearly every play has a serious aspect. Take *It Pays To Advertise*, a rollicking farce, but nevertheless with a solid criticism of modern life in it. It depends for its success on that criticism, and not on a lot of windows and doors with boggy-boggy entrances and exits.

There are other plays and before a producer casts his play or drafts his rehearsals he must carefully consider the author's point of view, and, having arrived at it, present it fairly and in full.

The actor, the scenery, the lighting are but means to that end, and if the end is not understood, then all else is in vain. A play is not a play until it has been acted. The producer controls that acting, and all that it means, and it is his responsibility to see that the intention of the author is "produced" for the delectation, entertainment, and excitement of the audience.

It will be observed that I avoid mentioning

"education." While it would be futile to deny the educative value of the theatre I deny that it is a necessary function of the drama to "educate." More harm has been done through that false but well-meaning slogan than anything else. It *may* educate, but that is incidental. A view from a mountain height *may* be educative, but a climber who toils up a mountain side purely for education is surely on the wrong path altogether. If the author's intention is to educate in its pure sense, then the producer will honestly bring that out, but in doing so he will show that it is a poor play that has no drama.

The drama is primarily emotional, secondarily intellectual. Good drama holds the mind through the emotions. This cannot be said too often. Let the producer eliminate the emotional content, for any reason at all, and he squeezes out so much drama. If for the sake of realism he turns aside the laughter and tears of the theatre and presents us with the stoical phlegmatic self-restrained conduct of ordinary people, his realism is too real to be in the theatre.

The author's intention may be the best in the world, but a wise producer will seek only those plays of good intent that are presented in dramatic fashion.

## THE PLANTAGENETS

By NEVIL TRUMAN

*Hon. Secretary, Nottingham Playgoers' Club*

**I**NOW deal with the period from 1154 to 1272—the reigns of Kings Henry II, Richard I, John, and Henry III. The constant travels of Richard I in the Crusades familiarized his people with the gorgeous fabrics of the East, and great luxury resulted. They brought back with them the *Dalmatica*. Another factor was the wearing of steel armour that readily rusted in every shower. To obviate rust the *Surcoat* was invented to cover the armour. It is in this period that the *Capuchon*, or hood, first appears, and it lasts through many centuries in one form or another; indeed, for a long time it remained almost unchanged, and we may say that it has persisted to our own day in the clothes of the monks and friars.

Garments became more voluminous and were embroidered. A favourite pattern was that of circles overlapping each other, which appeared on garments and shoes; when on the latter the embroidery was in gold.

Many new materials appeared. Of these were *Burnet*, a brown cloth; *Bysine*, a fine cloth of cotton or flax for mantles; *Ray*, a striped Flemish cloth; and *Damask*, which took its name from the city of its origin—Damascus. It was the rich stuff that is known by that name even to-day. Peasants wore a coarse brown cloth called *Burel*, a thicker cloth called *Byrrhus*, sheepskin leather named *Basil*, and a rough cloth termed *Brocella*. It is curious that all these names begin with the same letter.

Under Henry III, when the Crusaders returned, the Eastern materials came into rapid vogue, and had many delightful names, such as *Baudekin*, *Checklatoun*, *Ciclatoun*, and *Tissue*. All these were silk woven with gold thread and many coloured. *Sarcinet* was a thinner silk. The Tennysonian "*Samite*" was a similar gold-woven silk, rather like *Satin*. *Gauze* was known. Gowns and mantles were brought over from Italy, and all were richly lined with fur, for the badly heated rooms of the period were cold and draughty.

The effect of all this sudden magnificence tended to make the gayer folk try to wear everything at once, and this caused garments to become both numerous and bulky; indeed the age is known as the age of draperies. At the same time, the cut was simple and dignified on the whole, and did not attain to the fantastic shapes made fashionable by the clever and artistic Richard of Bordeaux.

### DRESS (Henry II and Richard I)

The *Dalmatica* was shirt-like, being a loose-sleeved, full-length tunic, worn over the *Undertunic*, which was of equal length, but had close-fitting, tight sleeves.

The *Mantle* was worn over all, and was voluminous and made from fine Flemish cloths or rich Italian silks.

### DRESS (John)

The *Surcoat*, which came into prominence first in King John's reign, was a full length garment, sleeveless, and with wide arm-openings. It had a slit from the bottom edge to the waist in front to give freedom in walking and riding. (This slit may be omitted.) Not yet are coats of arms emblazoned on the surcoat. It was belted in leather with a buckle and a long tongue falling in front. The whole was worn over

The *Long Tunic*, which reached to just below the knees and had sleeves, either tight or loose.

The *Capa* was a large mantle with a hood that could be drawn over the head when needed. It was made of wool.

The *Balandrana* could be worn over all these, and was simply a large cloak. It was worn, like the hood, when travelling.

### DRESS (Henry III)

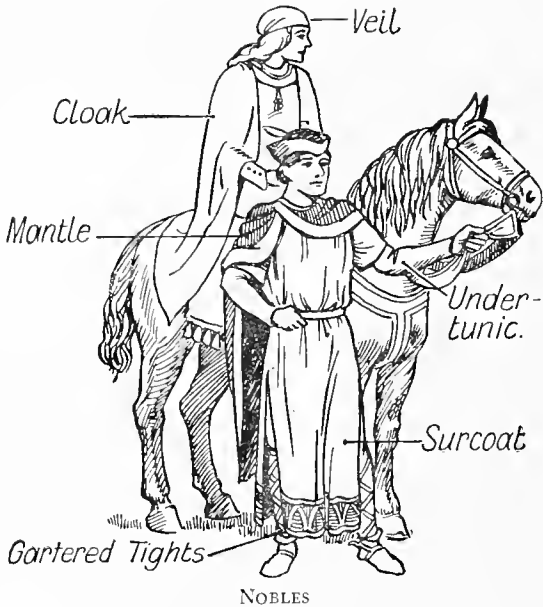
The *Surcoat*, which first appeared in John's reign, now became fashionable, and was as already described under that reign. It was worn over

The *Tunic*, which was either tight sleeved or loose sleeved, as in the previous reign, and

was of full length. The sleeves, if loose, should flow.

The *Cloak* was circular, fur-lined, and made of silk. It should be capacious. The furs in vogue were marten, beaver, badger, sable, and squirrel.

The *Capuchon* was a hood attached to a short cape that covered the shoulders, fitting neatly over



the chest, arms, and back. Its bottom edge was sometimes cut in semi-circles.

The short *Upper Tunic*, which is common to all reigns, was worn more especially by older men and was Tabard-shaped; that is, it was slit right down each side, it fell straightly down back and front, and was gathered in by a belt, so that many folds appeared.

#### DRESS (Women of all reigns)

The *Gown* was loose, with sleeves cut close from the elbow to the wrist, at which appeared a row of small buttons. The sleeves should extend well below the wrists, so that wrinkles appear throughout their length.

The *Belt* was in silk or leather, with a good buckle and long tongue like those of the men.

The *Aumônière* came in during Henry III's time, and was a silk or cloth bag hung from the belt at the left side.

The *Mantle* was a long cloak simply cut, left

open in front, and tied across the chest by cords, which were attached to the mantle by handsome metal clasps.

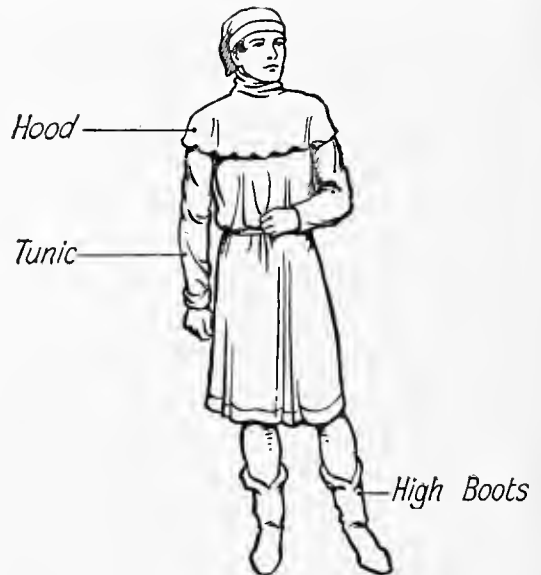
#### LEGS

The *Men* wore breeches, but, owing to the length of the tunics, these did not show. Stockings appeared in the earlier reigns, and in Henry III's time close-fitting tights came in.

#### FEET

The *Men* wore shoes that were slightly pointed in the earlier reigns, but in Henry III's time these became much sharper, the point, of course, extending in front either from the big or the middle toe.

The *Women's* shoes were similar, but the points were shorter. They should be of leather and well-fitting. Another version is a rather blunt toe, long enough to be bent back over the foot. They were fastened by one button above the



MIDDLE CLASS

ankle. High boots to the calf may be used. Both kinds were rolled over at the top.

#### HAIR

The *Men* were generally clean shaven, though a few had short beards. The hair was curled, and occasionally a fillet was worn over the brow.

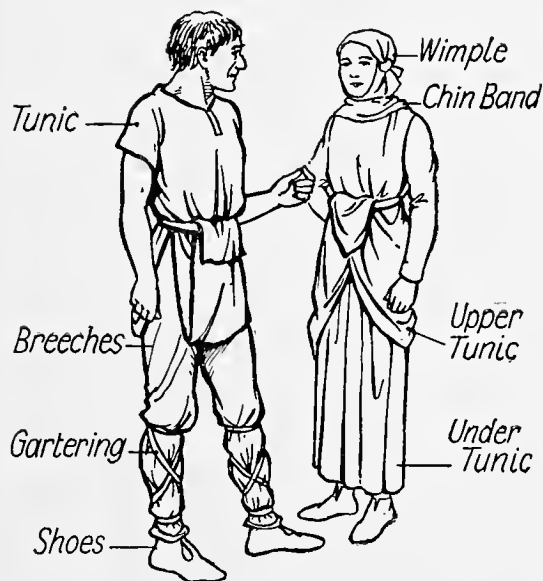
The *Women's* hair, though much hidden by the

wimple, was more elaborate in treatment. It was parted in the middle, and the plaits were gathered into two bags, one each side of the face. These were sometimes again covered by the *Couvre-Chef*, which was a veil. These bags could be richly jewelled or netted in an elaborate pattern.

### HATS

The *Men* wore tall crowned hats with brims which were turned up at the back and which ran forward to a point at the front. A long quill was stuck into the side. You will recognize from this description and that of the Capuchon that we have reached the age of Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest. *Conical caps* were also worn. They were of the sugar-loaf variety and were not too tall. The *coif* (really a peasant's cap) was worn by the better class when hunting, probably because as it was close fitting it did not catch the wind. Further, it could not be wrenched off when the

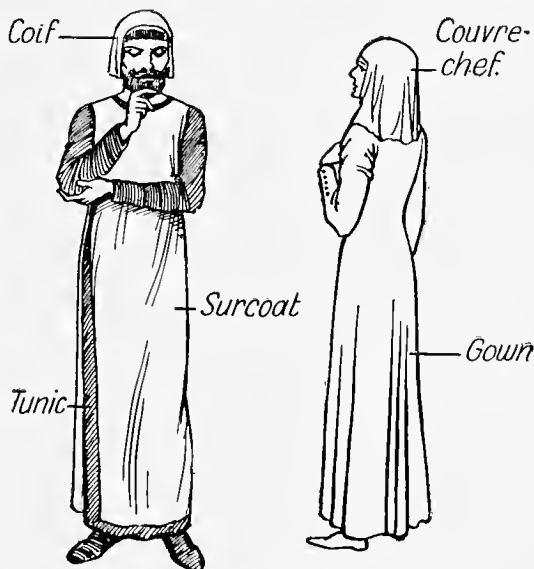
two pieces of white linen. One was bound round the forehead and secured by the other, which went under the chin. They were pinned together at the top. The former should be pinned at the back. This is a most becoming fashion, especially for older folk with double chins. It is seen to-day in most of the orders of nuns, though many of them



PEASANTS

hunters were passing under trees in the forest. The coif was white and fitted the head closely. It came down at the back and was tied under the chin with strings or it was without strings. The coif lasts well into Jacobean times as part of a judge's official dress.

The *Wimple* and *Chin Band* (women) was in



DOCTOR AND NURSE

have spoilt its beauty by unduly stiffening and starching the wimple and chin band.

### PEASANTS

Peasants wore, as usual, the always serviceable tunic and hose, with a coif or hood. It was a neat and warm dress that did not get in the way when the peasants were at work. They also wore breeches, which were loose and full to the knee, and tied round the waist with a string. The hose were fastened to the breeches by similar strings tied to the waist.

For their feet the peasants wore what were oddly called *Startups* or *Peros*. We came across the *Pero* in the chapter on Roman dress, and it is the same thing in this reign. They were high shoes, laced in the front, and the soles were pegged with wooden pegs that were similar, in principle, to those used in modern football boots. Considering the normal state of the floor of the living

rooms in this period a little elevation from it was quite desirable! The rushes covered many unpleasant things!

### GLOVES

*Gloves* were of gauntlet type. The wealthy had the backs richly jewelled. This custom led in time to the back being embroidered instead of jewelled, though the bishops retained their jewelled gloves to comparatively recent times. The poor had to be content with woollen mittens.

During the Crusades, with so many men away from home, there was little incentive to the women to dress themselves radiantly, and their costumes changed but little, but with the return of the warriors things took on a brighter hue. Cut, colour, and fabric became more elaborate and more gay.

In Henry II's time tights were fastened with cross garterings, which ended in a tassel below the knee. Shoes were of coloured leather, not black, and had golden stripes or patterns upon them.

### MEN

#### DRESS

Dalmatica — long sleeved	} Henry II and Richard I
Undertunic — tight sleeved	
Mantle—voluminous	

Belted surcoat	} John
Very long tunic	
Capa—large hooded mantle	
Balandrana—wide cloak	

Surcoat—leather belted	} Henry III
Tunic—tight or loose sleeved	
Cloak—fur lined, circular	
Capuchon—hood and cape	

Short upper tunic, Tabard shape	} All reigns
Gloves	

#### Legs

Breeches—did not show	} Richard I and John
Stockings—hardly seen under tunic	
Tights—close fitting (Henry III).	

#### Feet

Shoes slightly pointed (Richard I and John).  
Shoes sharply pointed (Henry III).

#### Hair

Clean shaven. Short beards sometimes.  
Hair curled, sometimes a fillet on brow.

#### Hats

Tall crowned, brim turned up at back and pointed at front.  
Conical caps.  
Coif when hunting.

### WOMEN

#### Dress

Gown—loose with sleeves close from elbow to wrist and long row of buttons.  
Belt—silk or leather.  
Aumônière—a bag at the belt (Henry III).  
Mantle—long cloak, open in front, cords across chest, fur lined.  
Gloves—jewelled.

#### Feet

Shoes less pointed than men's. Well fitting in leather.  
High boots.

#### Hair

Middle parting.  
Two hair nets at sides over bags, jewelled sometimes.

#### Hats

Wimple and chin band.  
Couvie-chef—a veil.

### PEASANTS

#### Shoes

Startups or Peros (*vide* Romans)—high shoes, front laced.  
Soles—wooden pegged.

#### Dress

Tunics and hose.  
Coif or hood of felt.  
Breeches.

# MAKE-UP FOR THE BODY AND LIMBS

By ALFRED HARTOP

*Perruquier and Lecturer to Amateur Societies*

If but as well I other accents borrow,  
That can my speech diffuse, my good intent  
May carry through itself to that full issue  
For which I changed my likeness.

*King Lear*

NOW I will deal with a few essentials other than those of the face, for the make-up of other uncovered parts of the body demands consideration and skill. The hands, arms, and shoulders, and in some cases the legs and feet, must be made up to supplement the facial colour and characteristics. With a straight make-up and modern dress, few parts call for attention. Probably the hands in all cases, taking their conspicuous movements into account, are apt to be noticed and criticized if neglected. Where sleeveless, open-neck, or low-cut garments are worn, parts that are usually covered—the arms, shoulders, neck, and possibly the chest and back—will require their share of suitable colouring.

The right kind of colouring matter to apply will depend upon the required effect, the parts of the body to be made up, and whether such parts are likely to come in contact with anything that will tend to rub the colour off. Grease paint and powder, cold cream and flesh coloured powder, or the sole use of powder, with special adhesive properties, known as "Stage Powder," will suffice for remote parts, but they are not permanent enough for the hands or arms.

Women can hide the adverse effects of occupation or exposure, produce delicate, well-cared-for hands, and the appearance of smooth, unblemished skin, by applying cream paint, which is a coloured cream; cream powder, cream with a proportion of powder mixed with it; or liquid powder (professionally known as wet white), which has a glycerine and distilled water base.

Cream paint or cream powder is satisfactory for occasional applications to small parts, such as the hands or the covering of local skin blemishes, though for larger areas, such as the arms, shoulders, chest, or back, it is advisable to use wet white, as this will cover the skin evenly

and will not rub off when it is in contact with clothing or stage properties.

Liquid powder in bottles is obtainable in a variety of shades that correspond with dry powder and grease paint shades, all of which are adaptable to the vagaries of complexion, colour of costume, or lighting colour scheme. There is, also, a dry block or tablet form that only requires to be wetted to make it ready for use.

If it is applied to the hands or arms, supplementary to a straight make-up, white gives a too chilly effect, and is inclined to appear patchy on a reddish skin. Therefore, for a fair or pink skin, the Natural shade will give the best results, and for a dark skin the Rachel shade. Before applying liquid powder to the hands, wash off all dirt or grease. Thoroughly mix the liquid and powder by shaking, then pour a few drops on to a small fine sponge that has been made damp with water, and apply them to the backs of the hands, over the fingers, and up the arms as far as necessary; spread the mixture evenly, yet thinly, into every crevice and crease, and then immediately pat it into the skin with a clean puff or soft handkerchief until it is quite dry. When it is perfectly dry the natural sheen of the skin may be restored by gently rubbing with the palm of the hand. Remove any trace of the powder from the finger nails, which may then be given a coat of nail polish, and, to give the impression of personal neatness to the last detail, treat with a "nail white pencil" at the exposed ends.

Take special note that it is not advisable to apply any liquid powder to the palms or between the fingers as, owing to moisture there, it will not dry thoroughly, and it is liable to rub off, with disastrous results to dark costumes or when it is brought into contact with men's clothing. Attention is drawn to the fact that all forms of

liquid powder have a drying effect upon the skin and tend to block the pores. They should not, therefore, be allowed to remain on the skin longer than is absolutely necessary, but should be removed as soon as possible, the skin then being thoroughly cleansed with hot water and soap. Unless the neck, shoulders, and back have blemishes to be hidden, or the skin is of uneven colour, it is preferable to avoid any application to these parts.

Character impressions call for imagination, suggestive effects, and a different choice of materials. Soiled hands, roughened, aged, emaciated, misshapen hands and arms play an important part in character roles, such as housemaids, charwomen, decrepit old women, etc. Simple types, like country girls or workers whose hands one would expect to show signs of their occupation, should not apply liquid powder. The suggestion of reddened skin can be given by applying dry rouge in irregular patches on the backs of the hands, the knuckles, the upperside of the arms, wrist, and elbow bones. Grease paint colours may be used in the same way, but they must be powdered over to avoid smearing.

Reference may now be made to the scope of utility that is offered by artist's water colours for making-up the limbs. A few tubes of these colours help to solve many difficulties. Small quantities of suitable colour wash can be readily mixed with water, or, for preference, glycerine and rose-water can be employed as the liquid base and the necessary amount of water paint can be added. This make-up is easily applied with a sponge or brush, is more permanent than grease paint, and is removed with soap and water.

To get the effect of pale thin hands associated with illness, apply a pale shade of either grease or water paint over the backs of the hands and the forearm; then with grey paint shadow the sides of the fingers and thumb, carry the shadows over the top a little to thin them between the bones in the backs of the hands, and continue around the wrists up the back and front of the forearms to make the tendons there more pronounced. Veins of the hands and arms should be indicated with pale blue or grey; they may also be drawn over water paint or powder with a soft lead pencil.

In the case of healthy old age, the hands retain a normal tone, though they are less shapely.

Shadows of Nos. 6, 8, or thin lake will give the suggestion of thin or crooked fingers and hollows, with small high lights placed on the knuckles and the ridges of the hands and wrists. Veining should incline to blue with a touch of high light at enlarged points.

For beggarly and disreputable types, lake between the fingers and brown shadows for all hollows are the most suggestive. A gnarled effect is given to the joints by broken lines of lake, supported with irregular small high lights.

Men playing sun-tanned or weather-beaten types should colour the hands, and, if required, the arms and neck, to match the face; also they should not overlook an application to the scalp if it is naturally inclined to be bald. Whenever it is necessary to have the legs exposed, a liquid wash of a colour that is suitable to depict the character or race should be applied to them. Simple washes that are inexpensive, yet serviceable, can be made from the following harmless colours, which are obtainable at most paint dealers: **ARMENIA BOLE** gives a fiery sun tan; **YELLOW OCHRE**, a dull yellow; **BURNT SIENNA**, a rich copper brown; **VANDYCK BROWN**, a dark native brown. The colours only need to be mixed with water, to which may be added a tenth part of glycerine. They can be used singly or mixed to produce almost any desired flesh tint, and can be applied with a sponge.

### TEETH

It is by no means a rare occurrence on the stage to see attractive features spoiled by unsightly teeth, which are apt to show with marked emphasis in the light. Obviously, dental treatment is the correct remedy, though discoloured teeth can be concealed and made to appear a desirable white by the application of **TOOTH ENAMEL**, which is obtainable in white and ivory shades. Gold fillings or gold cased teeth may be hidden. The teeth to be treated should first be cleaned and wiped perfectly dry, then they should be painted thinly with enamel with a tiny brush, the lips being held away from the teeth for a few moments to allow the enamel to dry. The enamel may be easily removed with eau-de-Cologne or other spirit, or scraped off with the finger nail.

On the other hand, it is often an advantage to alter the appearance of sound teeth to simulate



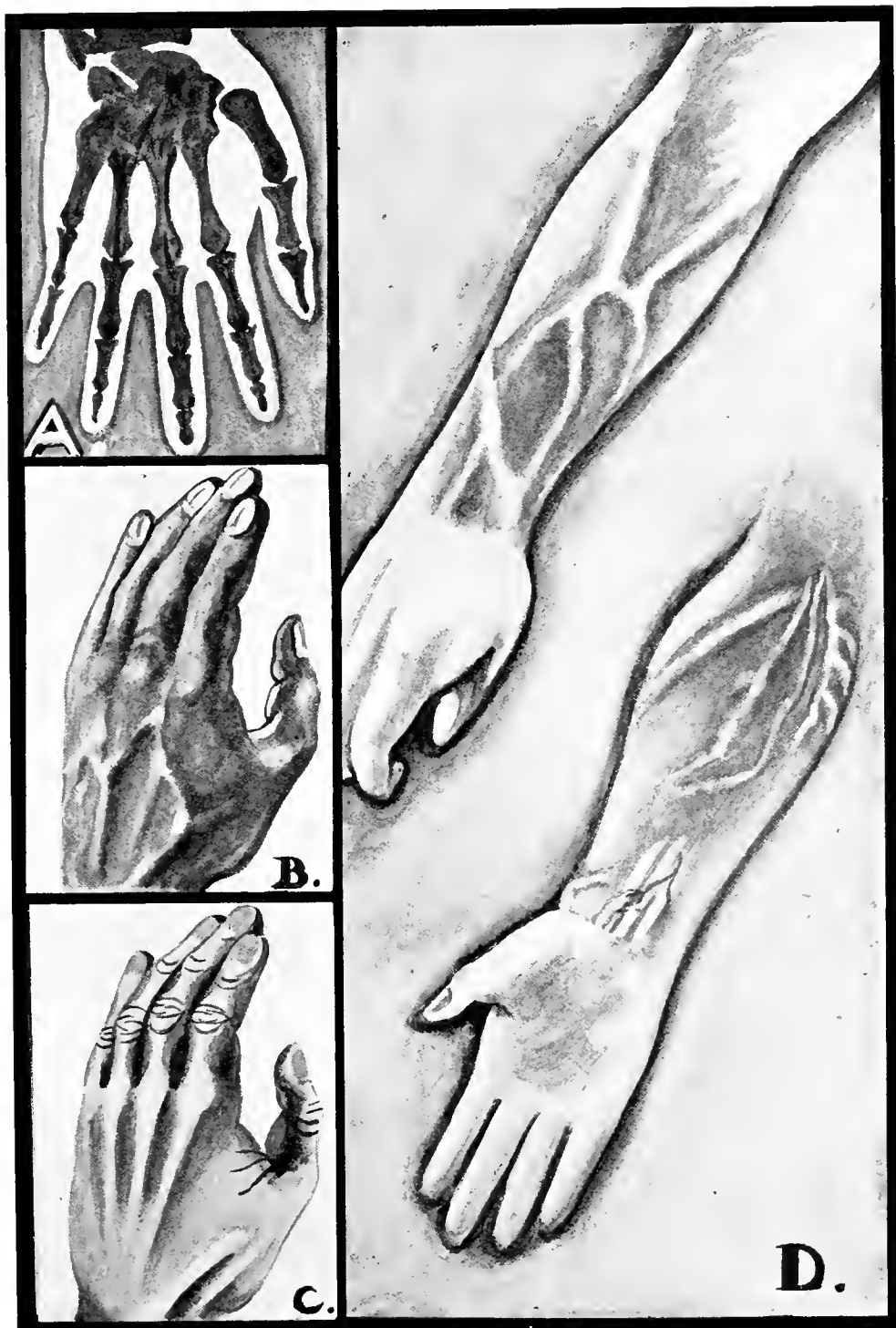


FIG. 13

A. SKELETON OF THE HAND  
B. VEINING OF AGED HAND

C. SHADING AND JOINTING OF AGED HAND  
D. VEINING AND SHADING OF FOREARM

the discoloured, large, broken, or missing teeth of characters such as aged persons, witches, and a variety of low comedy parts. To "black out" portions or whole teeth paint them with black tooth enamel, which gives a permanent effect and has less unpleasant results than other methods that are sometimes employed. Black or coloured grease paint, lip-stick, or court plaster can be employed if the effect is not required to last long. To enlarge odd teeth, a small piece of gutta-percha or modelling wax can be slightly melted and pressed on to the desired shape.

### THE HAIR

As an aid to character parts the need temporarily to alter the style of hair dressing or to change the colour of the hair frequently arises. Substantial alteration to the appearance can be made by parting the hair differently. Change of colour may be effected by using suitably coloured powder, grease paint, hair-cosmetic, water cosmetic, or mascaro.

There are limitations to what may be achieved by powders. Coloured hair-powder may sometimes be employed with advantage to lighten or darken slightly. So-called "fettputer" ("fat-powder," powder impregnated with oil) will alter the colour and give brightness to dull hair.

When it is necessary to imitate grey hair, either at the temples or over the whole head, an application of white fettputer, cornflour, liquid white, or white grease paint will serve. In many cases the use of shampoo powders for this purpose is advantageous because they are easy to clean from the scalp. Remember that there are two kinds, namely, dry shampoo powder, which only requires to be brushed out from the hair; ordinary shampoo powder, which produces a lather when wetted with hot water. Both are practically self-cleaning. Either may be applied with a powder spray or wool puff after the hair has been arranged in the required style.

Liquid white applied with a tooth brush gives a strikingly natural effect, but the hair should be free from oil or grease, otherwise it will not take the liquid. If the hair is greasy, use white grease paint instead, and apply powder over it; at the same time avoid conspicuous streaks or other artificial appearance by gently combing through the hair after the application. Where a perfectly

white head of hair is essential to the character portrayal, the only really satisfactory way to obtain the desired effect is to wear a wig. The best substitute would be to give the hair a liberal application of hair fixing cream and to powder it thickly before the cream sets—a messy business to clear up.

Alternatively, grey or light coloured hair may be darkened to any extent. For greasy hair the best preparation to apply is brown or black heating cosmetic—brushed on and removed with oil or grease; for dry hair, dark brown or black mascaro water cosmetic—applied with a brush or sponge and washed off with water. The water cosmetic will give the hair a dull look, but its natural sheen can be restored by the use of a little brilliantine.

Tinsel or metallic powder in silver, bronze, gold, and a variety of other brilliant colours may be used on the hair to produce extreme effects. Aluminium powder gives a silvery brilliance, gold and bronze produce beautiful golden-blond; other colours create fairy-like and fantastic illusions. They should be used only when they are absolutely necessary because of the difficulty in removal from the head and costume.

Whatever treatment is employed to change the hair, colour must be extended to the eyebrows, and in the case of men to the moustache also, to avoid any striking variance. Slight differences are of little account, as naturally the hair on the face is usually lighter than it is on the head. When the hair has been darkened, the eyebrows should be made to match, and if these are not well proportioned they should be extended slightly in order to give increased visibility. This treatment is assisted by applying carmine or lake, which should be allowed to run over the edge slightly, and then painting the hair dark with grease paint, adding, of course, a touch of powder. Water cosmetic may be used instead of grease paint, but in this case it must be applied after powdering.

To match grey hair, first darken the eyebrows, then add streaks of liquid white or white grease paint, start on the inner side, and diminish the amount of white as the outer side is approached.

Aged eyebrows are best suggested by applying white and making them stand out or overhang by rubbing them the wrong way; to complete the aged effect the eyelashes also should be whitened.

## LIGHTING APPARATUS

By C. HAROLD RIDGE, A.R.S.M., D.I.C., and F. S. ALDRED, A.M.Inst.C.E.

*Consulting Engineers*

THERE are other floods of a special character, such as those that are devised for the lighting of cycloramas and artificial horizons, of which the well-known Schwabe lantern is an example. This type of lantern is usually fitted with a tubular 1000 watt lamp having a straight filament extending the whole length of the lamp. Behind the lamp is placed an aluminium or enamelled iron reflector, and a semi-cylindrical glass colour screen is fitted in the front. This gives an horizontal beam spread of nearly  $180^{\circ}$ . A certain amount of theatrical history has been made by this lantern, but we ourselves feel that it is now obsolete. Similar results have been obtained with English apparatus, with economy in current consumption and lower first cost. Special types of floods have been devised for every purpose. Some are arranged with magazines of colour mediums, any colour desired being controlled from a distance by means of "tracker wires," but we ourselves believe that, instead, modern types of battens (to be described later) can be used with advantage, particularly if they are worked on a scientific colour-mixing process. Occasionally the ordinary type of flood is fitted with a modified form of reflector to give a restricted beam, or prismatic glass screens are placed in front to modify the beam into a rectangle or other shape. Floods with such restricted beam angles are useful, and sometimes essential when they have to stand near cycloramas or backcloths without actually lighting them. Special forms of these floods are often suspended over the stage and are called "acting area lanterns." On the Continent a clever design of acting area lantern made by the A.E.G. Electric Co. Ltd., employing an elliptical reflector, as shown in Fig. 20, is used. It will be noticed that the use of such a reflector gives a small aperture through which the light beam emerges, with the resultant use of a small colour medium. The acting area lantern has, so far, been rather neglected in this country, but it is an extremely useful instrument. Where a

cyclorama is used it is essential, as it is necessary to have a brightly lit stage without any of the light used for that purpose being spilt on to the cyclorama. The type of lantern usually employed in England was primarily designed for lighting arenas. It has a spread that is much too great for the theatre; but if it is fitted with a hood made of a number of concentric cylinders it gives satisfactory results.

Both types are illustrated in Figs. 21 and 22. The reflectors, which, of course, do not show, are not the same in both lanterns.

On the Continent acting area lanterns have a  $30^{\circ}$  beam spread. This is a satisfactory angle where a number of lanterns can be used if it is necessary to cover the acting area evenly. In Germany, where borders are rarely used, these acting area lanterns are hung about 40 ft. above the stage.

If only a limited number of lanterns is to be used a  $60^{\circ}$  spread will be better, and for the smaller English stage this will give a soft edged circle of light on the acting area, 21 ft. in diameter when hanging at a height of 16 ft., which is the average height for general working. It is, of course, possible to use a lens in acting area lanterns, but the light losses are excessive, and the short hood mentioned above is the most efficient method of confining the light economically. At the risk of stressing this point unduly, attention is called to the bad but common method of fitting a long cylindrical hood on to arena lanterns to convert them into acting area lanterns, thus making a huge and clumsy piece of apparatus with which most of the light is absorbed in the sides of the hood.

### BATTENS AND FLOATS

Battens and footlights are the principal standard apparatus on most stages, and as both are a

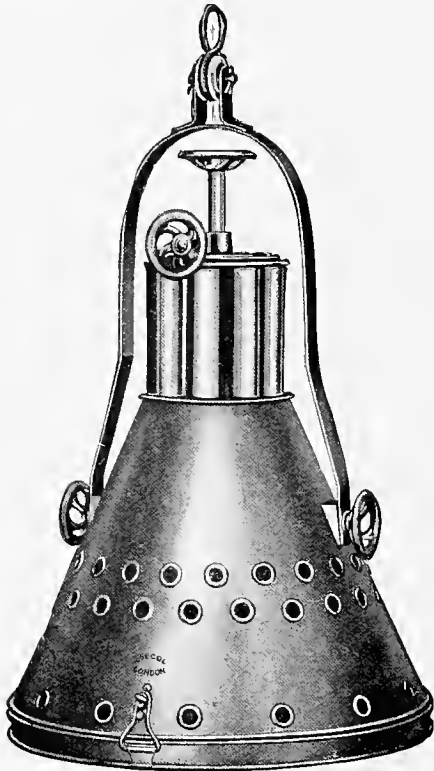


FIG. 20

species of flood-light they may be dealt with here.

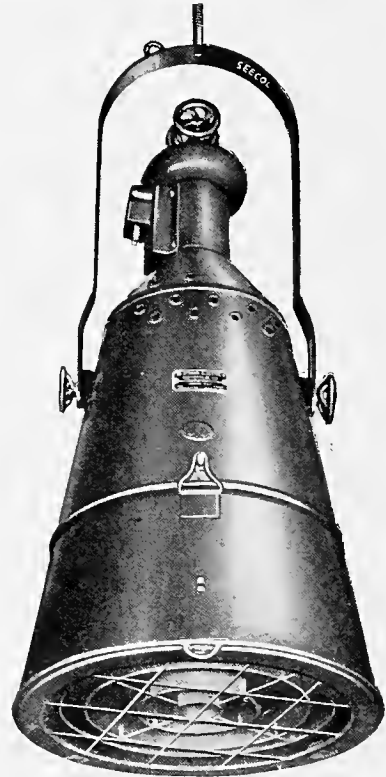
Old-fashioned battens and floats consist of a metal trough containing a row of vacuum lamps wired in one or more circuits. The lamps are coloured as desired by dipping in special varnishes. The method of colouring is first to see that the lamps are quite clean by washing them in soap

It is now possible to obtain lamps made from coloured glass in sizes large enough for battens and floats. The use of these coloured lamps or Damarda Lacquer has given a new lease of life to the old-fashioned trough type of apparatus, and it may be as well in theatres already equipped in this way to retain it or to install it in cases where first cost has to be kept down to a minimum. When



*The Strand Electric Co.*

FIG. 21



*The Strand Electric Co.*

FIG. 22

and water, or a new lamp without any greasy finger marks on it is used. The lamp, while burning, is dipped into a pot of varnish and allowed to dry. Two or three dippings may be necessary. The varnish is rather expensive, but it goes a long way if the pot used is only just large enough to take the lamp. Until recently the lamp varnish would not withstand the heat of gas-filled lamps, but there is now an excellent varnish, sold by Bakelite, Ltd., Warwick Road, Greet, Birmingham, under the name of "Damarda Lacquer," which will stand the heat fairly well.

using lacquers or coloured glass lamps the more advanced methods of colour mixing (to be discussed later) are not possible. In all other cases the newer compartment type of battens and floats with patent reflectors are many times more efficient. Fig. 23 shows a modern float. Here the lamps are of the gas-filled type completely enclosed in separate metal housings, fitted to take coloured glass or gelatine slides. The reflectors are of silvered glass or steel. It is usual to arrange the lamps in circuits of three or four colours, each colour being controlled independently.

There is a tendency nowadays, particularly in Little Theatres, to have a series of plug sockets immediately over the proscenium, and instead of using an ordinary batten, to plug in suitable flood lamps.

The floats, or footlights, can be built in when the stage is constructed in such a way that when it is not in use it presents a perfectly flat appearance. When needed, a pivoted board can be re-

some 3 to 4 ft. shorter: where space allows they should be several feet at least in advance of the curtain line. This enables the curtains to be pleasantly illuminated during intervals, and when the players are placed well down stage they will not be seen with brightly lit feet and poorly lit faces with unpleasant shadows and high lights. The amateur theatre is always faced with this problem

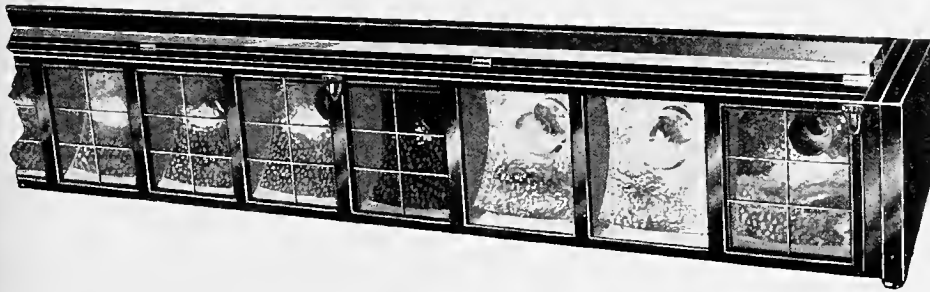
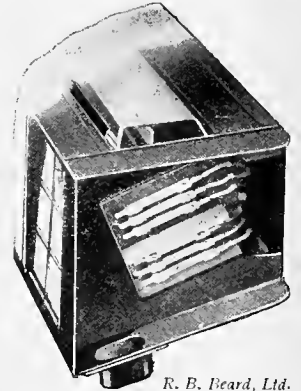


FIG. 23



volved (preferably by mechanical means from the switch-board) so as to reveal the float that is attached to the under side of it. A disappearing float of this type may be seen at the Arts Theatre Club, London, the Welwyn Garden City Theatre, the Alexandra Hall, Halifax, and elsewhere.

Temporary footlights are generally made to hook on to the front of the stage, as in Fig. 24, but they should be made as unobtrusive as possible, and the lights should be completely concealed. Lamps of lower wattage than those in the battens should always be used, and the proper adjustment

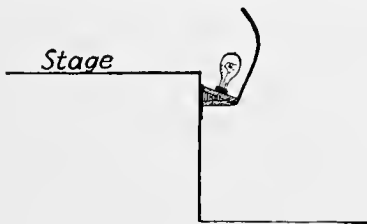


FIG. 24

of the hood, so that the light is confined to the stage and not allowed to stray on to the proscenium, is important. For this reason also footlights should never extend the whole width of the proscenium opening, but, as a rule, should be

because there is rarely sufficient depth of stage to allow the players to "play back" as the professionals do.

The construction of footlights, whether of the open trough or compartment type, is in general the same. They are made of sheet metal with an asbestos lined trough to contain the wiring, and this trough also carries porcelain holders to take lamps with screwed caps. Bayonet holders can also be used, but they are not to be preferred in the compartment type footlight, as they do not hold the lamp so rigidly in place; rigidity is desirable when the reflector has been designed for a definite distribution of light. The wiring from the stage switchboard is generally brought to a link box at the end of the footlight, the conduit being screwed into this box direct or connected to it by flexible metallic hose. The light distribution is important when cycloramas are used, as shadows would be disastrous. It is often neglected in other cases, the result being ugly multiple shadows on ceilings and back walls of interior settings, together with high lights on the underside of stage furniture and on the chins and noses of players.

To avoid these defects the reflectors are designed to distribute the light as much, and as evenly, as possible, with special regard to upward

throw, so that only the direct lamp distribution falls on the back wall of the stage and ensures that an actor standing close to the footlight and out of direct upward lamp distribution is still lighted. Again, the height of the lamp filament must be so arranged that its centre is on a line with the stage floor. This generally means a sunk trough at the front edge of the stage to take the footlights, with a slope up to the stage level. This slope should be covered with soft black cloth so that the spectators in the higher seats do not have the reflection of the lights in their eyes. To minimize the shadows cast by footlights at the back of the stage, they should never be bright; then the other lighting instruments will help to neutralize this effect. The more the footlights approximate to a continuous line of light, the less noticeable will be the shadows caused, because an actor standing on the stage has his shadow cast by the set of compartments opposite him, and these are partially neutralized by the light from the compartments at each side. In the case of the open trough type the result is still better, and for this reason some theatre electricians adhere to this old pattern. On small stages, then, keep the number of compartments at a maximum, which in practice means that they will be at 6 in. centres. This is the smallest compartment that will allow of the use of a 100 watt lamp: a 60 watt is the usual size in small theatres. The lower the number of circuits in a footlight, the greater will be the approach to a line of light, and three circuits should not be increased to four without sound reason. In large theatres compartments at 7 in. centres are the general rule.

The indirect footlight approaches perfection, but, so far as we know, it has never been used in England. On the Continent, where cycloramas are the rule rather than the exception, indirect footlights are often used. The light sources are placed below stage level, and play upon a curved metal shield, painted white, in the position of the ordinary footlight. This allows of most perfect colour mixing, avoids glare in the eyes of the players, and gives a soft pleasing effect on the stage without unpleasant shadows. Arrangements

are often made for bringing the apparatus into the direct lighting position, if desired, by the operation of mechanical gearing, either hand or motor driven.

Battens are of similar construction to footlights, and are, like them, a form of flood; but whereas only one footlight is required, there may be many battens, spaced, as a general guide, from 8 to 10 ft. apart. The compartments, in that type of batten, are usually at 7 in. centres, and take sizes of lamps up to 200 watts. Nowadays, if greater power is required, it is usual to have banks of special lamps or to use standard flood lanterns mounted on a barrel. The reflectors as a rule are designed on the same lines as those for footlights, but battens that concentrate the light somewhat are employed, especially in the down-stage position, that is for No. 1 batten. This pattern certainly helps to give an intense pool of light where the principal action is likely to be in most scenes, but it is quite useless for backcloth work where an even spread is desired. It is probably safer to have the same pattern for each batten throughout the stage, but the length will vary considerably. No. 1 batten should be shorter than the proscenium so that it may be contained within an interior setting. If such an interior has a ceiling, this will be the only batten that can be used.

The remaining battens will be longer in most theatres, and the back batten may with advantage be somewhat longer than the widest backcloth to be lighted.

A mistake, frequently made in the past, is to have the same lamp wattage in the back batten as in the others: it should be at least double if the backcloth is to be properly lit, and where this cannot be achieved by using larger lamps, two battens slung one above the other are frequently used.

At one time battens were made to take 300 watt and even 1000 watt lamps, but they were abandoned as standard apparatus because they took up too much space, which is more valuable for the suspension of scenery. Moreover, gelatine colour mediums do not stand prolonged use when they are close to lamps of more than 150 watts in apparatus designed to occupy the minimum of space.

# WIND

By A. E. PETERSON

*Founder, Sunday Night Adventurers ; Secretary, Kingston Marionette Players, etc.*

THE question whether scenery or stage machinery was used by Shakespeare has caused much discussion and the belief that his plays were acted upon a stage bare of decoration may have been wrong. Shakespeare was essentially a man of the theatre, and the repetition of the words "A storm is *heard*. Thunder and lightning," in many of his plays seems to indicate that he had some means of suggesting the noise of the "fretful elements," which he so frequently turned to account. The drum was already in use, and wind machines, consisting of long, thin pieces of wood of different widths, with holes of varying shapes bored through them and whirled around the head by means of a thong, were known to the ancients. Here, then, were two simple means of supplying thunder and wind. These puny efforts to accompany the majestic words of Shakespeare are referred to in an anonymous article, entitled "Theatralia," believed to have been written by Charles Lamb, in which the following passage occurs—"The Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery with which they mimic the storm he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements, than any actor can be to represent Lear," but what producer staging "the play" would neglect to supply the baleful flicker of lightning, the terrifying roar of thunder, and the shrill whine of wind?

The lack of sound effects has often been covered by adding to or amending the dialogue to meet the particular needs of the case, and although this is a dangerous course to adopt it is sometimes justified. In some plays atmosphere is developed by the subtle use of dialogue in such a manner that the provision of sound effects is unnecessary. A good example of this occurs in Beaumont and Fletcher's play *The Double Marriage*, the second act of which opens as follows—

## Act II

*Enter Boatswain and Gunner*

*Boats :* Lay her before the wind; up with her canvas  
And let her work. The wind begins to whistle.  
Clap all her streamers on and let her dance,  
As if she were the minion of the ocean.  
Let her bestride the billows till they roar,  
And curl their wanton heads. Ho, below there.

*Sailors (within) :* Ho ho.

*Boats :* Lay her North East, and thrust her mizen out  
The day grows fair and clear, and the wind  
courts us.  
Oh for a lusty sail now, to give chase to.

*Gunner :* A stubborn bark, that would bear up to us,  
And change a broadside bravely

and after more in this strain the audience can almost feel the wind blowing in their faces.

If it is impossible to produce a desired effect satisfactorily, it may be wiser to cut the effect altogether rather than risk failure. This course is frequently adopted. On one occasion, however, it roused the ire of Marshall who, writing in his *Chronicle of Events for April, 1847*, says—

7th.—*The Tempest* was produced at Sadlers Wells but in a mutilated state, the summoning of Ariel was entirely dispensed with, as was the famous opening scene with the sailors; and Mr. Phelps as Prospero looked more like Cop the conjurer than the high-minded, noble and forgiving Duke of Milan. The whole of Shakespeare or none we say.

The dramatist of to-day is saved these subterfuges and with the facilities of a modern theatre at his disposal no effect is beyond his reach. The amateur producer, faced with the presentation of such plays as *Granite*, *If Four Walls Told*, and *The Good Hope*, has no hesitation in accepting responsibility for the realistic sound effects required. In the third act of Heijerman's play, *The Good Hope*, a storm is raging and from the rising of the curtain until the close of the act there is ample scope for noise effects. The noise of "A gale" that "is blowing outside" almost drowns



the recitation of "A Prayer to the Blessed Virgin," and as the act proceeds every character that enters makes some pointed remark to the gale that is raging. One says "Has the wind gone down yet?" another "What a wind," others remark "What a storm." "The tree by the pig-sty has broken off like a clay pipe." "Here's a wind." "It's dreadful out of doors." "Listen to its cursed wailing," etc. A window is opened and the gust of wind that rushes in blows out the lamp; the pig-sty itself is eventually blown down, and throughout the act the wind "shrieks" and "whistles," whilst "wind" and "gusts of wind" are frequent stage directions. The curtain falls whilst a prayer is being said, and all the time "(The storm howls round the house)."

Before the invention of the electrically driven wind fan the heroine of old, who through the evil machinations of the villain of the piece, was turned out into the cruel, cruel world, somehow or other usually began her journey to happiness by fighting her way through a storm that almost tore from her body the few tattered rags that barely sufficed to cover her shrinking form. She was almost blown off her feet by the wind as she staggered across the stage to the accompaniment of the stifled sobbing of a sympathetic audience already in tears. At a well-known Lancashire theatre during the performance of a scene of this description, the entry of the heroine's stage stepmother, who was in league with the villain, was greeted by an angry uproar and a deluge of missiles. The manager of the theatre had to explain, personally, that the scene was simply make-believe, and that "Miss —— is at this very moment resting in her dressing room after her *strenuous* exertions," before the audience would allow the play to proceed.

The suggestion of real wind was made by having long black threads attached to various portions of the lady's dress, and as she swayed across the stage her dress was pulled and tossed from side to side by one of the stage hands who manipulated the threads after the manner of the puppeteer working his dolls. Just before her exit she was faced in the wings by two of the stage hands who were armed with large sheets of stout cardboard which they vigorously plied as she released small strips of dress material that she had held in her hand for the occasion. With the wind machine

roaring, the rain pattering in the rain box, and the darkened stage lit up by an occasional flash of lightning, the illusion as seen from the front was effective. Nowadays if we wish to stage a similar effect we employ a large electric fan.

As a contrast in stage methods this is how a modern theatre arranged a scene that demanded exceptional wind effects. The scene was a desert, and as the action developed a sand storm arose. The sky darkened, the wind whistled, and soon the sand was whipped into motion. The stage was covered deeply with a material to suggest sand. The "sand" was blown about by streams of air supplied by a special machine, and forced through a series of pipes laid under and brought up through the stage to a number of nozzles concealed in the sand material. When the storm began a number of pipes were brought into action, and the wind from these pipes sent a ripple of air across the sand, giving it the same visual appearance as a ripple on water. A second series of pipes was next brought into use. These pipes were so arranged that by systematically operating them in a carefully pre-arranged sequence the suggestion of the rapid whirl and twist of sand in motion was conveyed. A third series of pipes, placed immediately behind the footlights, was constantly emitting a steady stream of air, which formed a curtain and effectively prevented the escape of any of the sand material into the auditorium.

There are many machines that will provide a good wind sound, the commonest type being that which consists of a series of laths fastened between two circular end pieces of wood, which are mounted in a frame and rotated by means of a handle. The machine should be high enough for convenient working. A long strip of canvas is attached to the machine in such a manner that the edges of the laths come in contact with the surface of the canvas when the cylinder is rotated. The sound developed varies according to the size of the drum and the speed at which it is turned. A suitable canvas may be purchased from a ship chandler's establishment or from a firm that specializes in the manufacture of tents or stack covers. Three or four dozen varieties of canvas are made. Before deciding which particular quality to use it is wise to experiment.

A wind machine similar to that shown in the accompanying illustration (Fig. 1) is used in one



of our most progressive "Little" Theatres. The frame work is made of wood, and the iron handle by which the cylinder is rotated is of a substantial character. The axle is secured to the cylinder ends by lugs that effectively prevent the handle slipping round when pressure is brought to bear on the paddles. In many of the simpler forms of wind machines that are made by amateurs the apparatus sometimes fails at a crucial moment

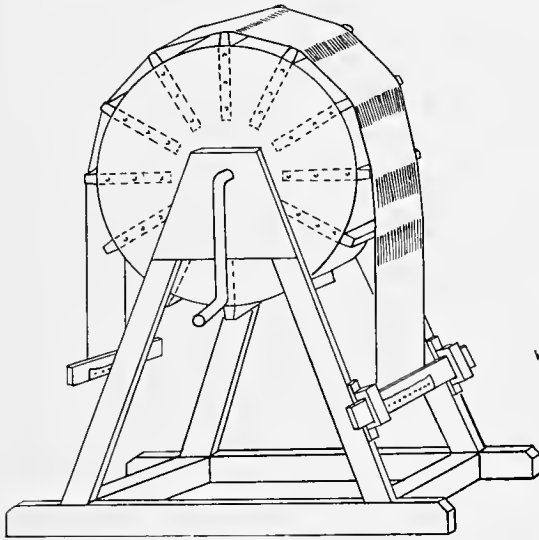


FIG. 1. WIND MACHINE

owing to the turning gear working loose and becoming ineffective. On a small machine this weakness may be eliminated by flattening a portion of the axle at that point where it fits the end piece of the cylinder and inserting wedges, which are firmly driven in.

Another effective wind machine has a long cylinder that contains two sets of paddles spaced differently. Three or four different toned canvases are used, and these are mounted on battens in such a manner that they can be quickly fixed over either set of paddles. The battens are held in position by iron holders that are fixed to the front struts. With the canvas hanging loosely over the cylinder when it is rotated, a good wind sound is produced and by exerting pressure on the free batten variation of tone can be obtained. This particular machine is three feet six inches high, three feet wide, and four feet long. The paddles are six inches deep, and are fixed to the

sides of the cylinder by screws. The paddles of one set are four inches apart and of the other three inches apart.

A well-known repertory company uses a wind machine that consists of the frame work of a long narrow table from which the top has been removed. The top wooden roller of a wringing machine with the cog wheel removed rests in sockets in the side of the table. Long triangular

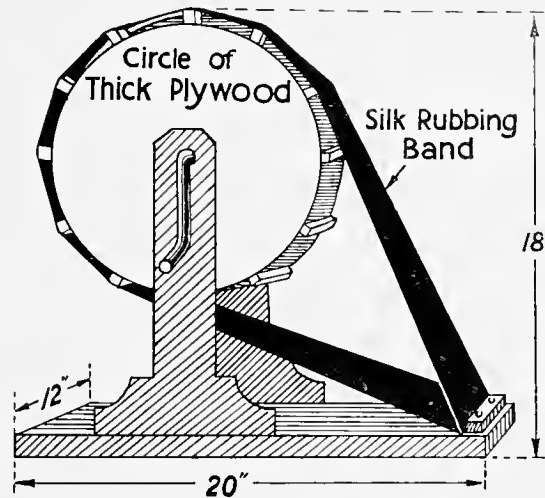


FIG. 2. PORTABLE WIND MACHINE

shaped pieces of wood, one inch high, are nailed along the roller, two inches apart. One end of the iron bar that goes through the wooden roller has been filed square at one end, and to this is fixed a large handle secured to the central bar by means of a split pin slotted through the end of the iron axle. A piece of canvas belting, about eight inches wide, is fastened to the underneath side of one end of the frame by means of flat headed nails, carried across the top of the roller, and secured to the opposite side. The wind noise it makes can be heard in every part of a large theatre and by simply pressing one finger on the canvas while the machine is being operated the low moan of the wind suddenly rises to a shrill whistle.

A smaller and more simple wind machine may be made. In the place of canvas, use a length of silk and fix it around a small cylinder, as illustrated (Fig. 2). The machine may be clamped to the top of a table or to the edge of the stage, and

the paddles may consist of strips of wood nailed or screwed to the outside edge of the cylinder end. It is always worth while to have a soundly constructed wind machine. When making it the cylinder ends should be prepared first. The centre hole in the cylinder should be bored through both end pieces at the same time to ensure the even running of the cylinder, and if the paddles are cut

with the ends perfectly square the cylinder should fit properly. The frame work of the machine should be made last, and, if possible, the handle should be removable.

For particularly shrill wind effects the noise of the wind machine may be augmented by blowing a whistle of the siren type, which may be purchased at almost any musical instrument shop.

# REHEARSALS AND REHEARSING

By DUMAYNE WARNE

THE rehearsals are one of the most important parts of any stage production, and not merely a necessary evil. For amateurs they should be as enjoyable a part of the show as the performance itself.

The chief difference between a professional rehearsal and an amateur one is that, whereas to the professional the rehearsal is work, and he must treat it as such or he will lose his job, to the amateur it is recreation, and when it ceases to be entertaining he can abandon it for something else. *Noblesse oblige*, of course, but the fact remains, and it accounts for a great deal of the difference in the manner in which they should be conducted.

There are two parties to every rehearsal—

- (a) The Direction.
- (b) The Company.

Successful rehearsals depend almost entirely upon how the two pull together. Pulling together in this case means the conscientious carrying out by the company of the reasonable requests of the producer, in the spirit in which it is required that they should be met.

The Direction consists not only of the producer, although he is the chief, but also of the following, who may be said to be his staff—

1. The Musical Director;
2. The Accompanists, or the Band;
3. The Dancing Instructor, if the Producer does not arrange the dances;
4. The Stage Manager and his Assistants;
5. The Prompter;
6. The Property Master (usually one of the Assistant Stage Managers);
7. The Wardrobe Mistress.

The company consists of the principals and the chorus.

These two parties are mutually interested that the production should be a good one, but whereas the company are also interested that the rehearsals should be instructive, attractive, and

enjoyable, the producer is only concerned with this in as much as it may help him to secure a successful production. The fact that the producer is also concerned with securing a fee is of no importance. Professional producers are a hard-working and conscientious race, and I have never heard of one who, having once undertaken a production, did not direct it with as much enthusiasm as any amateur—and certainly with “the utmost of his skill and power.”

But in making rehearsals attractive the producer is manifestly helping the show. One does not suggest that he should be a comedian, but his company will obviously learn quicker from him if he can contrive to be interesting rather than boring.

The chorus and some of the principals have another requirement, especially in view of the fact that they are seeking interest and amusement. This is known as the social side. Actually many societies owe their existence to the fact that they are social off-shoots of some other activity.

Catering for this is largely a matter of having a suitable rehearsal room. Many societies are not in a position to choose their rehearsal rooms to any great extent: they have to take what they can get or can afford.

The ideal rehearsal room really consists of a suite, containing one large room, with piano, for the chorus and numbers; another room (with piano, too, if possible) for the dialogue and principals' singing; and a third room for sitting out, as it were, in which the members who are not actually employed at the moment can read, sew, play cards, and chat to their friends. The rooms should be well ventilated and sufficiently lighted to make the reading of badly typed parts and of the musical score quite easy. There should also be adequate cloak-room accommodation for both sexes, with hot water and plenty of pegs for clothes, so that damp dancing dresses may dry (they will get very damp at a strenuous rehearsal), and the necessity for members having to carry bags to and from rehearsal be obviated.

The advantages of such a suite from the point of view of the company are—

1. They are not always being browbeaten and told to "hush."
2. The enthusiasts have somewhere to rehearse bits of dialogue, etc.
3. The studios have a place in which to learn their lines, read, knit, etc., when they are not wanted by the producer.
4. The sociable can talk to their friends without interrupting the producer.

Many committees will probably say "We could never afford a place like that." Probably not, but they could very likely adapt their present rehearsal rooms so that they might become much more like it. In any case such a place, properly used, could easily become, not an expense, but an asset. For example, a refreshment room could be started, which would probably produce sufficient profit materially to assist in paying for the room. Supervision would be necessary to see that this did not get out of hand. The fact that the rehearsal place was attractive would tend to lead people to the society for its social advantages. A larger membership would result, more tickets for the shows would be sold, and, in general, a feeling engendered that would carry the society from strength to strength.

A proper rehearsal room also copes with the next big requirement of the amateur actor at rehearsals. This is that he should not spend hours waiting about to go on the stage. It is easy to say that if a person is not keen enough to await his turn for rehearsal he should not be in the show, but we are dealing with the matter as it is, and not as it ought to be. Many societies are not strong enough to dispense with the services of all except the most enthusiastic. A rehearsal place that the company enjoy solves this difficulty.

If members are not provided for in this way, the producer himself must be more than ordinarily careful to do his best in the matter or he will be bothered greatly by absence from rehearsals.

#### PUNCTUALITY

One of the ways he can do this is by being punctual and by beginning at once, even if it is only with a small piece of dialogue, so that late comers feel themselves to be late when they do

arrive, and will try to improve next time; otherwise a feeling establishes itself that rehearsals are not intended to begin until some time after they are called. Incidentally, most of the best work is done at the beginning of a rehearsal, while the members are fresh. One that starts sharp to time instead of half an hour late may well be an hour shorter and more useful.

Another thing the producer can do to make his company attend is to avoid having discussions in corners with the Stage Manager, the Business Manager, the Wardrobe Mistress, or anybody else, while the company wait about for the rehearsal to continue.

#### FREQUENCY OF REHEARSALS

If the producer has only one large room in which to work, he cannot employ the principals while the chorus dancing is being arranged, so he must call them on another evening.

A major difficulty occurs when only one or two rehearsals are held a week, and the production has to be staged within a limited time. In that case the producer simply must call everybody and try to organize it so that they all get some work to do without too much waiting about. His main difficulty will be the small part principals. Their lot in an operatic production is a hard one as a rule. It often involves long periods of waiting, without, perhaps, much amusement to be got out of the parts when the time comes. Yet the way in which these small parts are played is of vital importance. The show with first-class principals can be wrecked by badly played minor parts, and many a one in which the principals are weak can be quite a success if the little parts are efficiently played.

The obvious temptation for the small part player is to feel that his contribution is so small that it does not matter if he is not present at one or two rehearsals, but the difficulty is that so many of them feel this on the same night that certain parts of a play may hardly get rehearsed at all because the proper people are never present.

It will not be disputed that in trying to provide this requirement for the company (that is, that they should not be kept waiting unnecessarily for their return to rehearse) the producer is both being pleasant to the cast and assisting towards making the show a success.

The last big thing that the company expects of a producer at rehearsals is courtesy.

The amateur actor is not bound to suffer the whims of an ill-tempered or ill-mannered producer, and the one who attempted to behave rudely would soon find his company quickly thinning out. He would certainly never secure a re-engagement, even if he were not asked by the committee to retire before his first production actually took place. So the producer has to find other ways of getting his work done than by bullying the company. He must be sufficient of a psychologist to decide on the proper manner with which to handle each member of his cast, bearing in mind that, if they cannot immediately do as he wishes, he may neither browbeat them nor sack them.

#### CHANGES IN THE CAST

Circumstances will arise, however, in which the producer must insist on changes in the cast. Except on the rare occasions when he is solely responsible for the casting, the proper procedure is for him to apply in the proper quarter (probably to a committee) and firmly but politely insist on a change. Casting committees are bound to make mistakes from time to time, usually because their conception of certain parts will differ from that of the producer's. But since he is responsible for the success of the production, they must take steps to see that every possible assistance is given him to secure it, and accede to any reasonable request he may make.

The less friction there is over this and other matters that reflect on the comfort and contentment of the company, the more successful are the rehearsals likely to be. Successful rehearsals almost invariably mean a successful show. Unless something goes seriously wrong at the theatre, the well-drilled and contented company are almost certain to give a good performance. (The words "well-drilled and well-contented" do not refer to smug, self-satisfied, and incompetent companies.)

We have now considered what the company expect at rehearsals, and seen that in realizing their expectations the producer is almost certainly helping to ensure a successful production.

Now we must consider what the producer requires of the rehearsals so that a good show may result, apart from whether or not it is going to suit the company.

Firstly, he requires their concentration. Secondly, a competent staff of technical assistants, so that his scheme of rehearsals will go smoothly, culminating in a final rehearsal at which the show will be fitted neatly on to the stage.

#### REHEARSING TO PLAN

All producers work to a plan, and although it may vary in detail, the underlying principle is usually the same. Briefly the plan is to divide the rehearsal period into four sections—

(a) The teaching of the singing to the chorus and to the principals by the music director—the principals to learn their lines.

(b) Begins with the arrival of the producer, and consists of the working out of the movement and dancing by the principals and chorus.

(c) The joining up of the dialogue and musical numbers, and the principals' and chorus work.

(d) Final rehearsals for speeding up, continuity, timing, and rehearsals with the band.

The rehearsal period may last any time from six weeks upwards; two to three months is usual. The first section of this plan usually lasts a month or so; the second another month; the third section about a fortnight to three weeks, and the final one will be entered upon as soon as the show is sufficiently advanced, but not so early that there is any danger of the company going stale before the first night.

In order to carry through this scheme of rehearsals, the producer requires the loyalty of the company. Loyalty, among other things, means attendance at rehearsals.

Sometimes, however, absence will occur from unpreventable reasons, such as sickness, etc., and in a genuine case every effort will be made to keep open the actor's place until he recovers. It will devolve on him to acquaint those responsible with the probable duration of his period of absence. Sickness is a piece of bad luck, for which no blame can be attached to anybody. Cases, however, will occur where a member will absent himself for reasons the validity of which may not be so apparent to those in authority. It is easy to say that the person should be relieved of his part, but some companies would not be strong enough to act in this manner. They would not have enough reserves, or the show might be too near for the part to be got up in time by anyone else. In this

case it is by no means easy to decide on the best procedure. Discipline must be maintained, but the show cannot be wrecked, so probably it is best for the committee to say nothing at the time, but to remember the matter when casting the next production, and to let the defaulter know quite plainly why he has not been given the part for which he thought himself so suitable.

#### THE PRODUCER'S STAFF

Assuming that all these matters can be satisfactorily settled, and that the company will attend rehearsals regularly and do their best, the producer has only one other thing to wish for, and that is an enthusiastic and competent staff of assistants; in fact, if they are enthusiastic, he may not mind if they are not extremely competent, as he can teach most of them what he requires them to do.

The number of these officials and of their duties is elastic. It depends on the size of the society and the size of the production. The list is not intended to be hard and fast, but only to serve as a guide. In a big society the work of one department may be split up among several people, whereas in a small society the duties of several departments may be undertaken by one person.

The list of duties below is concerned chiefly with what is to be done during rehearsal. At the theatre, other and different work may have to be done.

The *Musical Director* must see that the company know the music, and he is also responsible for the control of the band. He begins his work before the producer makes his appearance.

The *Accompanists* are required to have the patience of Job. It is better to have two, as playing for a four-hour rehearsal is extremely monotonous, especially if one number is rehearsed a good deal. After spending months rehearsing with the company, they relinquish their positions at the approach of the performance in favour of the band, unless the music is orchestrated to include a piano, which is unusual.

The *Dancing Instructor* or *Instructress* arranges the dancing under the guidance of the producer.

The *Stage Manager* is the producer's right-hand man; in fact, he is sometimes confused with him. His duty is to see that the wishes of the producer with regard to rehearsals are carried out, and includes such things as calling rehearsals, taking rehearsals in the producer's absence, and (with his assistants) setting the stage for each scene to be rehearsed.

Nobody can produce a play with his head buried in a book. The *Prompter's* duty is to save the producer having to waste his time looking for a line that someone has forgotten.

*Properties* on the professional stage mean all the things that are not scenery or electrical equipment. To amateurs they mean the hundred and one odd things, not furniture or personal property, which have to be gathered together—special flowers, books, revolvers, inkwells, etc., are specimens. It is important that any extraordinary property should be provided at rehearsals as early in the proceedings as possible, in order that the actor who has to manipulate it during the performance may become accustomed to its use.

A *Wardrobe Mistress* should be appointed, whether the costumes are made by her or not. She is responsible for taking measurements, and for making sure that the company know how to wear the costumes if they are hired and that they are properly looked after. She must not send or call people away from rehearsals without the permission of the producer.

If all the duties of these officials are correctly carried out, and the company's keenness is kept up by an interesting producer, a performance that is of the highest level of which the company are capable is assured.

There is one other subject to which reference may be made, namely, visitors at rehearsals. That they sometimes act as valuable advertising agents is the single thing that can be said in their favour, but that is only sometimes, so that unless they are important it is better not to allow them. If they must be admitted, they should be unobtrusive, for any attention they draw to themselves is sure to distract the producer and the company, and so interfere with the rehearsal.

## THE SAVOY FAMILY TREE

By D. GRAHAM DAVIS

Editor of "*The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal*"

THE principal characters in Gilbert and Sullivan opera have come to be connected, in the public's mind, with the actors who portray them. Thus we are apt to speak of a "Lytton part" or a "Jessie Bond part," phrases that help one to visualize the type of part referred to more graphically and clearly than any long, detailed description. This grouping is not accidental, for the principal parts do, in fact, fall into well-defined groups. Not only that, but it will also be found that there is a distinct family likeness between parts of widely divergent types. The small parts, choruses, and even to some degree the supers, are marked as part of this happy Savoy family.

Dealing first with the grouping of the parts, we find that it is not difficult to account for their resemblance. After the initial successes of the series, there developed what was practically a "stock" company. Thus, in evolving the later operas, the author and composer knew the tried material at their disposal, and shaped the parts according to the personalities and capabilities of the individual members of the company. This tradition has been continued; the actors are not so much engaged for their fitness to play *parts* as to portray *groups* of parts. Such a practice is, of course, common to any company that presents a repertory of works, but it is doubtful if it has ever been found in so complete a state as in the D'Oyly Carte Companies.

One must not be carried away into the belief that the characters falling into any one group are exactly similar. When we think of the characters (and especially the male parts) as being so grouped, we must also remember that, although fundamentally the same, each part in a group has clearly defined individual characteristics. Although Frederic and Colonel Fairfax are in one group, and Ko-Ko and the Lord Chancellor in another, four, not two, entirely different persons and mentalities are represented.

With the women this difference is not so

marked; the less so since we can divide the soprano roles into "lyric" and "dramatic" respectively. Gilbert's women folk are far more vaguely drawn than his men—as though he did not think it worth the trouble to give them such vividly marked characterization as he applied to the men. There is far less individuality to distinguish, say, Patience from Phyllis than there is between Alexis and Frederic. Oddly enough, it is those female characters that are drawn to an almost similar pattern that possess most traits to distinguish the one from the other. These are the contralto roles, most of which serve to emphasize one purpose—that of holding up an unattractive, elderly (and frequently husband-hunting) woman to ridicule. This trait in Gilbert's writing has often been subjected to adverse criticism, but this is neither the place nor the time to enter into an argument on that theme. It is sufficient to say that these "elderly, ugly" women possess a fund of common-sense and personality that is denied to their more attractive, younger sisters in these operas, and each of these parts is a "gem" from the point of view of the actress lucky enough to be selected to play one of them.

Coming now to the actual groups, it will be found that the principal male parts fall into five easily defined categories—

- (1) The light comedy leads;
- (2) The heavy comedy parts;
- (3) The tenor leads (replaced in two operas by light baritone);
- (4) The bass character parts; and (in certain operas)
- (5) A subsidiary, but important, baritone part.

In the examples that follow we will take the operas chronologically in order to save repetition. The order is *Trial by Jury*, *The Sorcerer*, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Patience*, *Iolanthe*, *Princess Ida*, *The Mikado*, *Ruddigore*, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, and *The Gondoliers*.

Group (1)—which is sometimes erroneously

called the "comedian parts"—is unrepresented in *Trial by Jury*. Its exponents, in the remaining ten operas, are John Wellington Wells, Sir Joseph Porter, Major-General Stanley, Reginald Bunthorne, the Lord Chancellor, King Gama, Ko-Ko, Sir Ruthven Murgatroyd, Jack Point, and, by traditional acceptance, the Duke of Plaza-



MR. MARTYN GREEN IN A DRAMATIC MOMENT  
IN "RUDDIGORE"

Sir Henry Lytton's eventual successor. Contrast this part with the rollicking fun of Ko-Ko in the same group

Toro : ten parts with, indeed, vastly different characteristics.

Group (2) does not appear in *Patience*, and usually can be held to comprise—The Judge, Dr. Daly, Captain Corcoran, the Sergeant of Police, Private Willis, King Hildebrand, Pooh-Bah, Sir Despard Murgatroyd, Wilfred Shadbolt, and Don Alhambra. At the present time there is a tendency for Dr. Daly, Captain Corcoran, Private Willis, and King Hildebrand to be found as slightly broadened examples of the fifth group, but, of course, not as "subsidiary" parts.

The tenor lead group, (3), is found in all the operas, but in *Patience* and *Iolanthe* the tenor loses his status of "lead," being replaced in that capacity by the baritone part shown in brackets, after the tenor. In *The Gondoliers*, there is a joint tenor-baritone lead. Group (3), then, is made up by: The Defendant, Alexis, Ralph Rackstraw, Frederic, the Duke of Dunstable (Archibald Grosvenor), Earl Tolloller (Strephon), Hilarion, Nanki-Poo, Dick Dauntless, Colonel Fairfax, and Marco Palmieri (with Giuseppi). There is another tenor, Cyril, in *Princess Ida* who is but little below Hilarion in importance. As it is Hilarion upon whom the romantic interest depends, it is usual to regard him as the "tenor lead."

We do not find anyone from *Trial by Jury* or *The Gondoliers* in the fourth, bass character, group. These glorious parts, giving great scope both for singing and acting, are: Sir Marmaduke Pointdextre, Dick Deadeye, the Pirate King, Colonel Calverley, Earl of Mountararat (a comparatively "straight" part), Arac, the Mikado, Sir Roderic Murgatroyd, and Sergeant Meryll.

The last group, (5), comprises: Counsel (*Trial by Jury*), Samuel (*The Pirates of Penzance*), Pish-Tush (*The Mikado*), and Sir Richard Cholmondeley (*The Yeomen of the Guard*), together with the three possible inclusions from the "heavy comedy" (second) group.

The feminine parts are more easily and compactly grouped into—

- (1) The soprano leads,
  - (a) Lyric,
  - (b) Dramatic;
- (2) The contralto parts; and
- (3) The soubrette parts.

There is a certain amount of interchangeability between the sub-divisions of the soprano group. For example, I include *Patience* and Phyllis in the "lyric" division, and Mabel among the "dramatics." But a lot of really good acting is called for from the first two, while a Mabel without a voice of the finest quality would be a failure. With such a proviso, which must be dictated by individual circumstances, one would place the soprano roles (still keeping the same sequence of operas as when dealing with the men) as follows: The Plaintiff (a), Aline (a), Josephine (b), Mabel (b), *Patience* (a), Phyllis (a), *Princess Ida*



(b), Yum-Yum (a), Rose Maybud (a), and Elsie Maynard (b). In *The Gondoliers*, Gianetta should be the lyric soprano, and Casilda the dramatic, but, with amateurs, it is sometimes desirable, or necessary, to reverse the classification. To avoid complications, certain other principal soprano roles (such as Lady Psyche in *Princess Ida*) must, for the moment, be allowed to remain with the small parts.

The contralto group is straightforward, beginning with Lady Sangazure in *The Sorcerer*. Thence it goes on to: Little Buttercup, Ruth, Lady Jane, the Queen of the Fairies, Lady Blanche, Katisha, Dame Hannah, Dame Caruthers, and the Duchess of Plaza-Toro.

The soubrettes range from the light-heartedness of Pitti-Sing to the drama and pathos of Iolanthe. It is a pity that this name persists, for it is all that there is to connect them with the pert, sprightly, soubrette of musical comedy. They are all charming girls, neither hoydens nor tom-boys. *Trial by Jury* is missed by this group, which is made up of Constance, Hebe, Edith, Lady Angela, Iolanthe, Melissa, Pitti-Sing, Mad Margaret, Phoebe Meryll, and Tessa.

Purposely I have ignored the parts from the first, and the last two, Gilbert and Sullivan operas. It is safe to say that *Thespis* is never likely to receive the attention of amateur societies. Quite apart from the shortcomings of its book, no one knows where the music is to be found! It is difficult to fit the parts from *The Grand Duke* and *Utopia Limited* with any satisfaction into the groups. These two operas are to be treated separately at a later stage. Before that time comes, each of the better-known characters from the other works will have been dealt with individually in a more detailed consideration of the groups than is now possible.

The grouping, excellent though it may be for a professional company, offers certain difficulties to amateurs, and one cannot therefore advise too rigid an adherence to it. Indeed, as I have hinted, there has been some departure from it in professional circles, but as this is largely a question of the personalities of the members of the company, it must not be taken as indicating, in any way, a definite dropping of the accepted practice.

Where the amateur is concerned there are even more things than the question of the personality

of the actor to be considered. The membership of the society, for instance, is constantly changing; fresh blood comes in with good claims for parts, while there may be no reason for passing over the "old hands" in its favour. Most committees wish to give everyone a chance, and this can sometimes be effected by transferring the old member to a



Photo by Kathleen Iddon

**"MY FACE IS UNATTRACTIVE"**

Miss Dorothy Gill in a part in which an ugly make-up is compensated by unrivalled acting and vocal opportunities

different type of part, while putting the newcomer in the group thus vacated, and in which he will shine better than in the group to which his fellow-member has been relegated. That brings us to the question of adaptability—an asset that the professional actor usually possesses in a greater degree than does his amateur brother. An amateur may give an outstandingly brilliant performance of the Grand Inquisitor in one season's production of *The Gondoliers*. For the next presentation *The Yeomen of the Guard* may be chosen. Following the grouping system, the previous year's Inquisitor

would naturally be considered fit to play Wilfred Shadbolt. Yet there may be all manner of considerations against casting him for this part (of course I refer solely to artistic considerations). He may be well endowed by nature for delivering the Inquisitor's lines with all their due ponderous unction, and he may be aided in his stiff, unbending mien by a magnificent carriage. But this same actor may be utterly unable to realize the rough, uncouth tones of the jailor, while his military bearing, such an asset in the previous part, would be out of keeping with the slouching figure one expects Wilfred to be.

I myself have dealt with many amateurs who, in different productions of the same society, have played many varying parts. My finest Shadbolt was an excellent Mountarat and a satisfactory Luiz. For the same society, he also played Pooh-Bah and, some years ago, Frederic—a fine example of versatility. Many amateur contraltos have, to my knowledge, begun in the soubrette parts, and one of the finest amateur Katishas of recent years surprised and confounded her colleagues (and the critics) by a most successful interpretation of the soprano lead in a subsequent, non-G. & S. production by the same society. This digression will serve to show that the grouping system is certainly far from being infallible where amateurs are concerned. Nevertheless, a full knowledge of its composition is essential for a complete appreciation of the requirements of the operas. Also, the indications of its shortcomings may help to stress the point that only fundamentally do the parts within each group resemble the others placed with them.

I have referred to the family likeness that is noticeable in all Gilbert's characters—whether principal, subsidiary, or even supernumerary. This resemblance is at once more obscure and more obvious than that between individuals in the groups. Obscure, because one might well ask in what way can the stately Lady Sangazure be related to the cut-throat, yet humane, pirates of Penzance, yet obvious when one realizes that they are all products of one man's brain, and brought to life, not by any independent, and possibly unsympathetic producer, but by their creator's own individual direction. Gestures are duplicated, so

are movements, and, in a surprising number of cases, even the lines recur in a totally dissimilar type of character. On the more technical side, one finds them all instilled with that elusive Savoy tradition. Apart, therefore, from what they may do and think as characters in the particular opera, one can see the imprint of all Gilbert's benevolently-autocratic dictatorship stamped indelibly on his creations as they have come down to us.

One can see this relationship, in another way, in many of the small parts. Many of them are undeveloped so far as characterization is concerned in comparison with the greater roles, but they all show unmistakable signs of their kinship to the grouped parts. Whether (like the Notary in *The Sorcerer*) they are in evidence throughout the opera or (like Isobel in *The Pirates of Penzance*) they are forgotten after their one scene or number, they are clearly recognizable. What is the Major in *Patience* but the "light comedy lead" in miniature? Who is Leila in *Iolanthe* but an undeveloped soubrette? The pomposity of Sir Joseph Porter and the engaging roguishness of Ko-Ko both peep out in the unconventional Peers shown us in *Iolanthe*.

It would be interesting, to help appreciation of the fact that the resemblance between parts in a group is more fundamental than apparent in the playing, if one were to draw up a family tree of one of these groups, finding one character as the head of the family, and tracing the relationship of the others in the same group from their resemblance to the common ancestor and each other. If such a chart were to be drawn up it would be devoid neither of interest nor of instruction. Such a treatment of the light comedy group would show the close relationship between John Wellington Wells and Ko-Ko, who clearly prove to be thorns in the side of their dignified cousin, Sir Joseph Porter. Sir Joseph's brothers, the Lord Chancellor, and Major-General Stanley, being more kindly souls, would not frown so much on these upstarts, but the sole representative of another side of the family, Reginald Bunthorne, would profess ignorance of their existence; and so on throughout the group. There is the idea; it is left to the reader to work it out in more detail.

# THE RUSSIAN CLASSICAL BALLET

By ARNOLD L. HASKELL

*Joint Founder of the Camargo Society, Director of the Ballet Club, etc.*

IT is always well at the outset of any subject to discuss and define the "classical" period, which sets a standard by which the other periods can be measured. I have not been privileged to assist at the Maryinsky Theatre spectacles, but what follows is not entirely hearsay, for the great dancers of the Diaghileff days were Maryinsky trained and the tradition has persisted and can be clearly felt. Also it is impossible to discuss Fokine without understanding what it was that he evolved from, and how the St. Petersburg Ballet itself became truly Russian. People talk glibly of Russian Ballet and the Russian School with no clear idea of what it really implies, and of how the journey via France and Italy affected our art.

Dancing had found its way to Russia long before there was any State supported institution, and the Imperial ballet first owed its being to the Court performances of troupes belonging to wealthy private Meccenas. But as is the case with everything new to a country, inspiration had to come from abroad; such famous masters as Didelot and Perrot brought French methods to St. Petersburg in the early part of the last century. But the real Russian Ballet, as we know it, was brought to Russia by two foreigners who subsequently adopted Russian nationality, Johannsen, a Swede, pupil of the Bournonvilles, who were pupils of Vestris (that is one line of succession of the Russian School), and Petipa, a Frenchman, a native of Marseilles. Both were professors in the schools and developed the actual dancing technique; while Petipa was also the father of modern choreography. Apart from these permanent residents, all the great dancers came as guest artists, including the Italians with such dancers as Zucchi, Brianza, who afterwards taught Karsavina for a season, Limido, Legnani, and Cecchetti, the great *maestro*, who afterwards joined the Imperial Schools as a teacher, and subsequently the Diaghileff ballet, and who has left behind him, especially in this country, so rich a

legacy. It will be seen then that St. Petersburg was a rallying point for dancers, and as is natural it was able to take the best from each school, the grace of the French with the strength and technical repertoire of the Italians. Such method superimposed on the Russian physique after a time gives us the Russian School of Ballet, with its large, noble movements, its fine, proud carriage of the head, its avoidance of bulging and ungainly muscles and its freedom from mere acrobaticism disguised as dancing. The Russian School has sometimes been called "the true French School that the French themselves have forgotten." Be that so or not, its origin is polyglot. That is a point to be remembered when we clamour for British Ballet. Art can know no patriotism in its small, limited sense, and it takes some generations for ballet to become indigenous. We have as yet to produce an English ballet tradition. All the time we may be creating it, but I fear not, for we have not yet the necessary machinery that has existed in Ballet's three homes: France, Italy, and Russia.

"Classicism" here must not be confused with the attempt to revive the Greek dance, which has found so much favour in England, where under the influence of Duncan, groups of girls in tunics pose loosely round the Parthenon and are photographed.

"It would be impossible to find an organization which has given to the world more *classical* dancers of different and varying talents than the Imperial Russian Ballet."

It is with these words that Valerian Svetloff, the great Russian critic, begins his exceedingly interesting study of Anna Pavlova. It is the word "classical" in this phrase that strikes me most. Kchesinskaia, Trefilova, Pavlova, Karsavina, Egorova, Preobrajenskaia, all have this one thing in common; they are "classical" dancers, though in every other respect they differ, each having a clearly defined personality. Fortunately, the majority are now teaching and have formed the dancers of to-day in their image. Trefilova is the

classical dancer *par excellence*, an inspired interpreter of Tchaikovsky; Pavlova was more dream-like, more sentimental, using the word in its best sense, while Karsavina has made her name rather in the Fokine Ballet as a romantic actress of power and versatility, and Preobrajenskaia, who



KARSAVINA IN "GISELLE"

has given so many dancers, including Toumanova, to the contemporary stage, excels in the humorous and in mimique. Each one of these great artists is entirely different, yet each one has this common grounding of "classicism," and it is this classicism that has permitted each dancer to express her particular personality. It is interesting, therefore, to inquire into the exact nature of this classicism without which the dancer of the ballerina class cannot exist. I do not intend to treat the question from a dance technique point of view,

but from a wider and more easily understood aspect. The word can easily be translated without any reference to the sister arts, though as it will be seen without much difficulty, classicism in painting, music, and ballet are very closely connected.

Firstly, I would translate "classicism" very freely to mean "pure dancing" (Noverre has said in his famous letters: "Pure dancing is like the mother tongue"), the "classical dancer" to mean a dancer of perfect technique who has sought no short cuts to proficiency, and the "classical ballet" as a ballet designed first and last for the dancer. Such definitions are necessarily incomplete, but they give us an approach to the truth, which we can reach by elaborating them. Firstly, by "pure dancing" I mean that dancing which has been based on the five positions, which produces long, graceful lines, and which is neither acrobatic nor in any way violent and lacking in dignity. The classical dancer has a definite system, built up by years of study, and it is only when this system has been thoroughly learned, has become a second nature, that the dancer is ready to be seen by the public. The opponent of classicism shows great ignorance of the subject by the argument that the *pirouette*, *pas de chat*, etc., are monotonous and meaningless, and that the modern public requires something significant. Apart from the sheer abstract beauty of a well executed step, a quality that is entirely missing in what the opponents of classicism would give us as a substitute, the classical dance can be full of character. The steps of a dance are like the musical notes, they are limited in number, and the effect depends on how those notes are combined and executed. The arguments used by the modern school of painting, arguments with which I am for the most part in thorough agreement, cannot be applied in the case of ballet. The arguments of the modernist painter are naturally based upon his media of canvas and paint, while in ballet the medium is the human body, and however justified deformation maybe on the canvas, it is out of the question in dancing. The mistake that is always made by the opponents of ballet dancing, and I am speaking of dancing here and not ballet, arises either from a totally incorrect view of what is actually happening, or from the fact that they have never seen a first-class *ballerina* dance. They

make the great mistake of thinking that the dancer is expressing "classicism," instead of taking it as it really is, that classicism is helping the dancer to express herself. They would probably understand the argument if applied to the pianist or violinist, and if the word "classicism" were replaced by "school." Just as without "correct fingering" no would-be pianist, however bright the fire of genius burned within him, would be able to express himself, so it is with the dancer. Once the technique has been conquered, the artist can express his personality. He may specialize in Bach, Beethoven, or Chopin, and what is more, he may interpret his chosen composer in a manner that has never been tried before. This is much more the case with the dancer, who is not bound down to such a great extent by the choreographer. The whole Russian School of Dancing is the gradual result of the interpretation of the Italian and French methods of dancing by such purely Russian dancers as Vera Trefilova. A simple *pirouette* may be danced by any number of dancers of equal technical ability, and produce an equal number of entirely different sensations. Firstly, it may be danced by the brilliant technician, and beyond the admiration her virtuosity calls for, it may leave the spectator cold and bored; a certain tightness in the movements may make it vulgar and irritating; it may be taken poetically, aristocratically, passionately, mischievously, in as many different manners as there are differences of character. There is nothing great about the *pirouette* itself; it is merely a note in a melody, a step in a choreographic creation, yet it can be made great by a great executant, and from an abstract point of view it is a thing of intense beauty. Ballet, like every art, requires close study. It is not the mere idle entertainment that some would have it. Taken as such, without a knowledge of the technique or an analysis of the art of the *prima ballerina*, it may quite conceivably be less exciting than the more immediately obvious dances that are offered to us daily.

The eccentric ballet that has departed from classical dancing leaves little chance to the *prima ballerina* to excel or express her personality, and that is one of its many drawbacks as a form of art. It destroys the dancer.

I have stated that classical ballet was ballet designed first and last for the dancer. In saying

this I am both explicit as to its nature and at the same time vague. I have stated its most essential characteristic, but it needs further explanation to find out what constitutes good classical ballet. The old-fashioned ballet was a singularly stereotyped and unimaginative affair, based upon symmetry. In spite, however, of all its drawbacks, its lack of intelligence, and its many ridiculous features, it possessed one solid virtue—it gave the dancer an opportunity to shine, and its movements were a definite help to the dancer's physical development.



VERA TREFILOVA IN "ARABESQUE"

Photo by Manuel

It could in no way be taken as an artistic whole. Movements could be taken separately, criticized, and appreciated from a point of view of abstract beauty. The music of such ballets was often as worthless as jazz and resembled it from the point of view of simplicity of rhythm and utter vapidty.

Such was the classical ballet at its worst. At its best it was different, really expressing something. The finest artists in the country, men such as Korovin, Golovin, Roerich, Benois, Anisfeld, designed costumes that were a help, and not a hindrance as is so often the case to-day, and the music was composed by such a genius as Tchaikovsky, music both beautiful in melody and easy for the dancer to follow, and the choreography magnificently created by the father of Russian Ballet, Petipa.

Such productions were few, but that is in no way a criticism of a system that could produce from within itself its own remedy, and in Fokine's evolution those classical principles that have formed

the great artists of the dance were in no way dispensed with; they were and still are retained as the basis of ballet.

One of the greatest dangers of classicism is an abuse of virtuosity, an insistence on quantity rather than quality. There is nothing more contrary to the spirit of classical dancing and of Petipa himself than this acrobaticism, this insistence on a record number of *fouettés*, or *pirouettes*, with a complete disregard of the music or the finish of those steps. The whole beauty of the *pirouette* or *fouetté* consists not in their number but in their crispness and their finish. I have explained the terms "classicism in dancing," "classical dancers," and "classical ballet," and have also stated that all the great dancers have been classical dancers, but there is another and more difficult point that yet remains to be explained. Karsavina is a classical dancer, yet by nature she is essentially dramatic; Pavlova was a classical dancer, yet by nature a romantic. Preobrajenskaia is a classical dancer and yet by nature a mime or a comedienne. Up to now I have used the term "classical" to denote training, and it has therefore been common to all great dancers, and in order to explain something of their art I have to find another term descriptive of their temperament. But there is such a thing as a classicism of temperament, and it is thus that I would class Vera Trefilova, the true type of classical ballerina of the Maryinsky period and whose performance in the *Sleeping Princess* at the Alhambra set a "ballerina standard" for history. She is a classical dancer both by training and temperament. She may and can perform a record number of *fouettés*, but each one will be perfection, about each one there will be style and finish. The spectator is not so much amazed by their quantity as by their remarkable purity. He does not sit, restless and counting, wondering whether she will ever get through—and I have done so with countless

dancers—he is too enthralled by the amazing beauty of line. The celebrated thirty-two *fouettés* of *Le Lac des Cygnes* are artistically unnecessary, if not actually ridiculous, and one is always struck with that fact, save when such a dancer as Vera Trefilova is the dancer. So classical a role only appears in all its beauty when a ballerina who is classical in feeling as well as in technique performs. In ballet, perhaps far more than in music, the temperament of the artist binds him to the interpretation of the works of certain composers. Each of the great dancers, in spite of the magnitude of her repertoire, becomes associated with a certain type of role, and for that reason comparisons can be drawn that are detrimental to no one. One's preference will generally depend upon one's own temperament.

Vera Trefilova in a Tchaikovsky Ballet is Russian Ballet at its highest, and I lay stress on her performances because I believe her to be the greatest *dancer* we have seen in London and she has set a definite standard for all time.

The Russian periods of Russian Ballet have lasted but an exceedingly short time. Rapidly, from its Italian origins, ballet becomes truly Russian. Its first step is a change that implies no loss of nationality; then speedily it absorbs the culture of modern Paris; for a short time it retains its character; then the desire to please the foreign public transforms it, and Russian Ballet is no more, and we must think in terms of Diaghileff Ballet. In all there are but two brief periods: the birth of the Russian style, and its evolution from the classical to the romantic. The history of Russian Ballet has been one crowded hour; it has altered almost every branch of art that has come into contact with it. In the brief years in which it lasted it produced such a wealth of talent that one might well compare it to the much longer period of the Italian Renaissance.

# HOW TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF AN IMPROVISED STAGE

By CONSUELO M. DE REYES

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IN any school, college, or institute hall the usual problem is to turn a room into a theatre merely for temporary purposes. In such a case, the stage and proscenium wall must be movable and must be capable of being transferred by a few hours' work into a theatre.

A certain number of theatrical dealers now place on the market patent devices for building

having permanent legs, exactly resembling a kitchen table, which can be tied together. This requires, however, considerable storage room, so that it often becomes necessary to make a stage that can be stored in less space. The illustrations suggest the possibility of a good, sound stage that can be put up and taken down easily. It will hold any weight and can be put up and dismantled

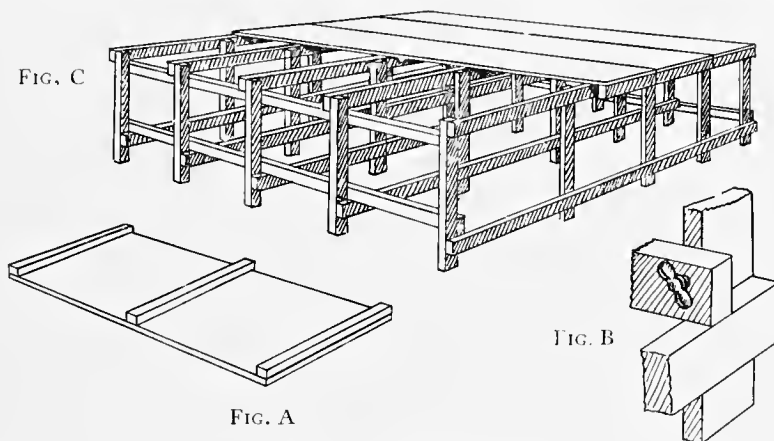


FIG. A

FIG. B

PLAN FOR A MOVABLE STAGE

Fig. A. Section of top Flooring

Fig. B. Method of fastening to uprights with bolts and winged nuts

Fig. C. Plan for Movable Stage

a stage in blocks, but this method is both too expensive and too cumbersome for ordinary use, and it is far more economical and interesting for an energetic dramatic organization to make its own stage.

It is, of course, essential that the stage should be solid, and above all, any tendency to creak that results from warping or uneven manufacture must be avoided, since such a fault will ruin the nerves of both players and audience. The easiest type of stage to build will be that which resembles a number of tables built in sections, each section

without using any tool. Sections of floor boards are nailed to cleats and supported by a framework of beams, measuring two by four. The section of the framework shown in Fig. C consists of five uprights and two long beams parallel to the floor. These may be nailed permanently, and are therefore capable of being lifted away in one convenient light and big piece. The long beams of the supporting structure are fastened to the uprights with bolts and winged nuts as shown in Fig. B. The uprights may be braced in other places in the same manner ; they should not, however, be more



than eighteen inches apart. As many sections can be made and fastened together as are necessary to make a stage of the desired size. The short cross-beams supporting the planks of the floor of the stage should be close enough to hold them absolutely rigid—fourteen or eighteen inches apart at the most. The cross braces may be fastened to the short, upright beams that hold the sections with bolts and winged nuts, and the sections may be fastened to the frame and to each other in the same way.

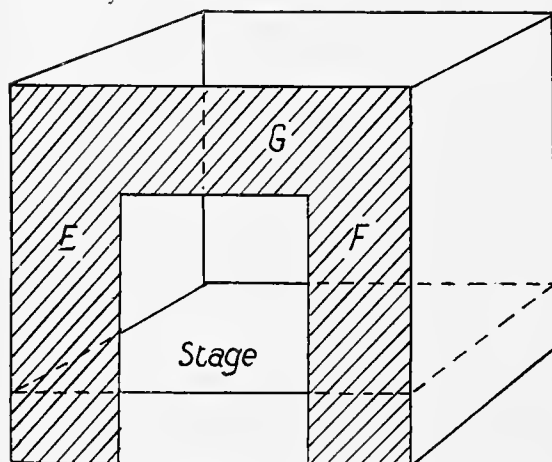


FIG. D. PROSCENIUM WALL CUTTING OFF STAGE FROM AUDITORIUM

Such a stage will be satisfactory if thoroughly good wood is used, and it must be remembered that every care must be taken in its construction to ensure absolute accuracy, for any good play production is impossible on a shaky, uneven platform.

To make a proscenium wall, there are two possibilities. The wall may be made of covered frames or of draperies. If it is desired to build a temporary proscenium of frames to cut off the stage end of the room from the auditorium, these should extend across the top from wall to wall to form the upper portion of the frame, and, in addition, there should be two tall pieces or frames extending from floor to ceiling. In its simplest form, the proscenium, therefore, consists of three pieces as Fig. D, i.e. two tall pieces *E* and *F* standing on the floor, and a crosspiece *G*, reaching from the inner edges of these frames and placed up against the ceiling.

An arrangement of this type needs, however, to be supported by the side walls of the room, or

by the platform. This is a simple method if rings may be attached to the wall or ceiling, but if this is not allowed, then a proscenium must be made that will support itself. This, however, can also be effected with a little care. Each piece of the side frame must be made of two sections, laced or hinged together so that they can be placed at an angle to one another. The crosspiece that forms the top of the proscenium may be fastened to the inner edge of the uprights. The curtain, too, may be attached to these uprights, and thus the entire proscenium stands on the floor like a big screen.

The frames may be made exactly like ordinary scenery, i.e. of cloth stretched on battens, or they may be covered with some form of building board such as Essex board or Beaver board. They may be painted attractively, just as any scenery would be painted, or they may be coloured to resemble the room in which they are to be used. This arrangement for a proscenium can be put up in a few hours and taken down in a few minutes.

A temporary proscenium of draperies can also be made. This method is popular where storage space is difficult, since draperies can be rolled up and stored in a small space. This system consists of three pieces of drapery, two long enough to fill the space from floor to ceiling on each side of the opening, and a short piece to make the top of the proscenium curtain. These draperies exactly resemble Dutch curtains, with the short top curtain forming the valance. The material employed for making such curtains will vary according to the amount of money that is available. It may range from velvet to cotton. Frequently painted hessian curtains produce excellent effects, especially when they are decorated with bold designs.

We ourselves made one of our most successful curtains for our theatre at Citizen House out of scrim, which is of the same nature, texture, and colour as packing canvas, and which can be purchased at about fourpence a yard in wide widths. Bold figures comparable to Bayeux tapestry were then painted upon it in poster paints, and the figures were outlined with thick, black wool in a coarse running stitch, which had the effect of throwing them into excellent prominence. A lining will probably be necessary, whatever type of material is used, to make the curtain hang well and resist air currents, which always tend, if a light material is used, to blow the curtain



backwards on to the stage, revealing the feet of the players and settings during the intervals, or outwards on to the heads of the audience. Between the lining and the curtain at the base of the hem, a length of chain should be inserted to give further weight. This chain may be of any size, but it should be covered with canvas so that it will not easily wear through the curtain.

In selecting any form of velvet or velour, it should be remembered that these materials are purchased far more cheaply from the upholstery department of any store than from the usual silk or velvet counter. Moreover, upholstery materials are nearly always supplied in wide widths, the use of which effects great economy in sewing and also results in more artistic drapery.

A curtain, thus made and weighted with a chain, will always hang in excellent folds when it is suspended from a heavy wire stretched from wall to wall up against the ceiling. No attempt should be made to hang the curtain on a light wire, the use of which will make the curtain sag in the middle. The wire *A* shown in the accompanying Fig. E should be stretched from wall to wall up against the ceiling. It may be fastened at each end to hooks *C-C* in the walls or ceiling. A turnbuckle, which may be secured at any ironmonger's shop, may be used at either end or at both ends of the wire to keep it taut, which is the essential factor. The curtains may be hung on rings. These should be large enough to run easily on the wires or the curtains may have a hem through which the wire runs. If preferred, the curtains may be laid on the floor and arranged in folds, which are then nailed on to a batten. This method keeps the curtains in identical folds, and when they are taken down the entire curtains may be wound round the batten and put away in a vertical position.

A second wire *B* placed an inch or two behind the proscenium curtain and six or seven inches above the bottom of the top curtain makes the best support for the opening curtain. It may also be made rigid by the use of turnbuckles. Thus the entire proscenium hangs from two wires *A-B*, which depend on four firmly fastened hooks *C-C*, *D-D*. Usually these hooks may be made inconspicuous, and they can generally be left permanently in position, so that to put up the proscenium one has only to slip the ends of the wire

over the hooks, tighten them by turnbuckles, and shake out the curtains.

Whichever form of temporary proscenium is used, the making and hanging of the opening curtain will be identical and will probably be the same, even in the case of a permanent proscenium. Probably the most satisfactory curtain is the one that has a double curtain opening and draws to a close in the centre. The other type of curtain is known as a drop or guillotine curtain, since it unfolds from a top roller. This is difficult

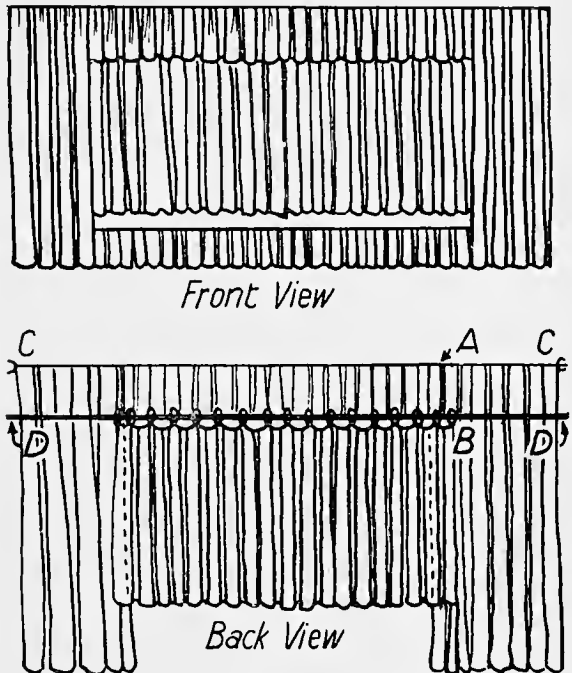


FIG. E. A PROSCENIUM OF DRAPERIES

to arrange unless the overhead space is sufficient for it to be hauled straight up. Further, it is not equally effective, since it usually results in the legs of the players remaining visible for an appreciable time after the remainder of the figure has disappeared, and it usually comes to rest with a definite bump on its inevitable roller.

If there is sufficient room overhead a drop curtain may be lowered by pulleys and ropes in the same manner as a fireproof curtain. Sliding curtains can also be run on a track and pulley system, procurable from any theatrical manufacturer, but actually it is possible for anyone to

rig up a proscenium curtain with any but the heaviest material.

Run a heavy wire from wall to wall in the manner already described for the proscenium curtains. Tighten it, if required, with turn-buckles, if the weight of the curtain still causes it to sag in the centre. Support it by a wire hanging from the ceiling in the exact centre. This will give it the necessary lift. The curtains should be run on this wire on sliding rings, which should be

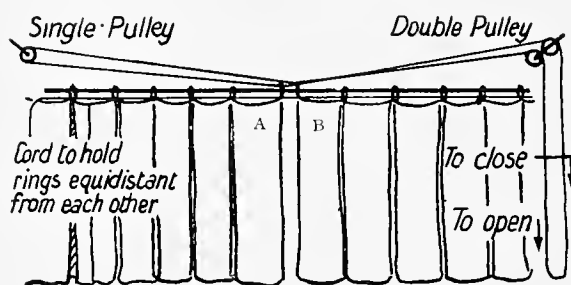


FIG. F. THE SINGLE LINE METHOD OF PULLING THE CURTAIN

placed on the curtains six or eight inches apart. Therefore the total number of rings required will depend on the total width of the curtains.

The best method is to put the rings on the exact place on the wire and then to fasten the curtains to the rings, either by means of curtain pins or by sewing. This method will secure the desired folds. Now it is necessary to tie the rings together at a proper distance with a light cord, which will go from ring to ring and prevent them from moving apart when the curtain is pulled by one corner, which would otherwise straighten out the folds. When the rings in the corners of the curtain *A* and *B*, Fig. F, are pulled forward or back the curtains will follow, and the curtains will remain in folds, as desired. A rope will now be required to open and close the curtains. To do this, a single pulley is necessary on one side and a double pulley on the other. The curtains will be worked from the side where the double pulley is placed. The curtains must be tightly closed, just as they should be when in position, and a light

rope tied to the corner of one *A* run through the single pulley and brought back and fastened to the corner of the other *B* as in Fig. F. It is essential that this rope should be tight, and that it should be double the distance from the point where the curtains meet in the centre to the pulley. Then a rope must be run through one sheaf of the double pulley and fastened at the corner of a curtain *A*, and the other end of the rope run through the other sheaf and fastened at the other corner *B*. When the rope fastened to the near curtain *B* is pulled, the curtains will open evenly and equally, and when the rope fastened to the other corner *A* is pulled, they will both close. This operation is exactly the same as that used when two *portières* are made to open and close by the pulling of a single cord.

The one difficulty with which we have frequently contended is that curtains so put up are apt to leave a small gap in the centre where they meet. It is worth the utmost effort to prevent this, since the atmosphere of any scene is ruined when hurried preparations for the following scene can be seen through the smallest gap in the curtain.

Actually this problem may be overcome by two simple methods. Two parallel wires may be used, one for each curtain, so that they slide by one another, or by a yet simpler method. The first ring on one curtain may be set back six or eight inches, so that this curtain overlaps the other by that amount. In that case, the ropes for working the curtains must be tied to the corner *A*, and not to the first ring. The other ends should be tied to the first ring on the other curtain *B* just as usual.

From these instructions it can be seen that a thoroughly efficient Little Theatre stage can be erected with a minimum of time, trouble, and expense. This should not be taken to mean that such details are non-essential; actually they are supremely necessary, since upon them the smooth running and professional standard of presentation of the play will depend. Adequate and carefully planned equipment will, moreover, free the mind for its proper function, which is the presentation of the play with the utmost beauty and sincerity.

## THE ACTING MANAGER—I

By H. P. HOLLINGDRAKE

*Hon. Secretary, Bolton Operatic Society ; Life Member of the Council of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association*

THE acting manager is the official or representative of the society who is placed in control of the auditorium, or "the front of the house," as it is usually called. He is responsible for all arrangements for booking seats, whatever system may be most suitable; for the cash receipts at the box office and pay boxes; for the sale of programmes; and for the nightly "return" or complete statement of receipts at each performance.

He is in supreme command of "the house" from the theatre doors to the curtain, just as the stage manager is in command behind it. This is a strict rule that must not be infringed, and it is worth while elaborating or illustrating it, for unless it is fully understood friction and unpleasantness are bound to ensue. The theatre is divided into two separate and distinct portions, the auditorium and the stage, the pass doors communicating between them forming a barrier through which there is no passage from either side *without permission*. That is to say, the acting manager has no power to authorize any person to pass from the auditorium to the stage without the express knowledge and consent of the stage manager, nor can the latter grant permission for any person to pass from the stage or dressing rooms into the auditorium without the knowledge and consent of the acting manager. This rule must be scrupulously observed. The only exception to it is the personal privilege accorded to all officials of the society, who, if they are wise, will not avail themselves of it over-liberally.

To be a success as an acting manager it is necessary to realize that the society presenting the play or opera, and therefore dependent upon an audience for its existence, is in the position of a seller and not a buyer; and that the acting manager is the salesman. Upon him rests the responsibility of advertising his wares attractively and making them easy of access. Leaving for the present the subject of advertising, it is to the

seating accommodation and the method of selling it that special attention should be concentrated. Whatever system of selling tickets of admission may be adopted, or tested as an experiment, one indispensable feature of it must be the ease and comfort with which a willing purchaser may be enabled to witness the entertainment. Finical rules or a suspicion of red tape methods must be avoided, not only in the booking of tickets of admission, but also in the theatre itself. Remember that each occupant of a seat is your guest, and not a mere number; and that a guest should be welcomed and not irritated or dragooned. It is usual to have a few voluntary assistants in a full-size theatre—not to supersede the regular theatre staff—but to undertake the sale of programmes, especially if they are of the modern souvenir type. Ten or a dozen smart stewards (with a chief steward in charge) in evening dress, distributed throughout the theatre, have been known to realize £100 by the sale of programmes during a week's performances (without matinée) in a Lancashire theatre. Some societies appoint a bevy of girls dressed *à la mode* or in the costume of the opera for the same purpose, but, for reasons that prudence forbids me to disclose, they have not proved in general experience so successful as their male competitors. The acting manager should appoint one of the stewards to organize the sale of programmes, i.e. to take responsibility for receiving and checking deliveries from the printers, to issue supplies nightly for sale, to tally programmes unsold, and to hand over the cash receipts to the acting manager or hon. treasurer.

Before I deal with the actual booking of seats I will refer to two important duties for which the acting manager is responsible: (1) the issue of "paper" and (2) the nightly "return." The latter is the record that is kept in duplicate of the total receipts of each performance. It is analysed in meticulous detail for every part of the theatre. Whether Entertainments Tax is payable or not,

the return must account for every seat that is occupied at each performance and the price paid for it, the total agreeing with the total number of seats in the theatre, less the unoccupied and complimentary seats. Here note that, unless the tax is not payable, the tickets for the latter must be stamped "COMPLIMENTARY" across the face and the counterfoils must also be so stamped. A rubber stamp is generally used. To "paper the house" is to issue at the discretion of the acting manager a sufficient number of free passes for a performance where it is obvious, from the booking plans or local knowledge, that otherwise the company will play to a house so thin as to imperil the success of the entertainment. Only experience will guide the amateur as to the extent to which "papering" is politic: if it is too meagre it is of little use, but if it is over-lavish or indiscriminate it defeats its object by encouraging the professional "dead-heads." It is a sound principle when issuing complimentary tickets to send them only to such persons as can be relied upon to use them and to appreciate the courtesy. Such institutions, for example, as the local infirmary, nursing homes, orphanages, and district nursing hostels should always be included in the "free list"; and I would also suggest to the acting manager that a couple of stalls—more if available—tactfully presented to the G.P.O. telephone operators through their lady supervisor "for services rendered" will

always be welcomed—and repaid. If, as often happens, considerable papering is necessary on the Monday night of a week's run, a couple of seats allotted to each of the acting members will ensure a warmer audience than a chance collection of pay-box dodgers.

The acting manager must, amongst his multiple duties, see that reservations are made for the local Press on the opening night, and that the representatives are supplied with any information or items of public interest that it is desired to publish.

One or two useful hints may be offered to the inexperienced—

Ascertain from the stage manager *before opening* the approximate times of the intervals and the final curtain. You are sure to be asked.

Make notes each night of the *actual* times of ringing up, etc.

If possible—and it often is—ascertain the location of a doctor in the audience in case of need before or behind the curtain. Many doctors volunteer this information on arrival for their own convenience in anticipation of a telephone call.

Remember that your brief authority ends on the last night of the production: it is much better to exercise tact and leave the theatre staff to deal with any unpleasantness where personal or legal rights may be involved. But on all other matters your authority, though brief, is complete.





MR. RALPH LYNN

*Stage Photo Co.*

# ACTING IN FARCE

By RALPH LYNN

TO be a success in farce is not as easy as it appears to be to the average theatre-goer. It has been said that anybody who can write can turn out the first act of a play, and it has often been thought that any actor who can act can be successful in farce. Well, just as there are many writers of plays who find the second and the third acts, especially the third, too difficult for them, so there are many actors and actresses who find it impossible to leap the hurdles that they are bound to come across when playing in farce.

I remember the well-known dramatic critic, Mr. James Agate, once wrote something about the art of farce writing that struck me as being very much to the point. One has always been given to understand, he pointed out, that the actors of the old Italian *commedia dell'arte* made the play up as they went along. The author contributed a sketchy plot, a book of words to be used or discarded at will, a few conventional types of character, and left the rest to the taste, wit, fancy, and invention of the actors, who then introduced gags, business, or any other matter of amusement.

Probably I remember that because there are so many who think that it is simplicity itself for an actor in farce to make up his lines as he goes along, to gag as the resourceful music-hall comedian in a revue does upon occasions necessary and unnecessary.

Well, work in farce, like any other kind of skilled work, is simple when the requisite technique has been learned. This applies to workers who have nothing to do with the theatre. It applies also to games and sports. The golfer cannot play a good game until he knows how to use his clubs—and he has to know much more than that—the swimmer splashes about rather than swims until he is a master of strokes, and we all—or some of us—know the surprises of skating until we can control our feet!

Technique is a word that has been overworked by the highbrows—but it stands for something very real and necessary. It may be more natural

to think of the art of acting in tragedy or in romantic comedy than it is to talk about the technique of acting in farce—yet in my opinion acting in farce is more difficult acting than any other type of acting, and English made farce is better for English audiences than French or any other kind of farce.

*The Era* years ago summed up the situation to a nicety: “Beginning with Aristophanes upward, the miracle and morality plays—where the comic element was purely farcical—from Molière, who raised farce to purest comedy, passing *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, up the centuries to Foote, Buckstone, Burnand, and Pinero, it is clear that farce has held a firm place in the affections of the playgoer. The English farce, the home-made article, has generally been worthy of its place, and whether inclining to burlesque and extravaganza, or encroaching on the domains of comedy itself, has appealed strongly to the English people, who, prone enough to ‘take their pleasures seriously,’ have rather preferred genuine and hearty farce to the social satire of the French stage and the stodgy philosophy of the German. . . . English farce, while relying also on situation, depends largely on character-drawing, and makes sterner demands upon the ability of the players. And, where French and American farce, by its very nature, tends to become *risqué*, the English leans more towards burlesque. . . . To weave a complete tangle, and, finally, to draw out every thread and present a perfect, if fantastic, pattern, should be the aim of every craftsman in the art of farce.”

To think in this way about farce-making helps actors—and, of course, actresses—to understand what is wanted for acting in farce.

A farce is not a thing that just happens; it is a piece of writing that has to be skilfully made. There must be an idea in it. The characters may be “away” from human nature, they may be, no doubt will be, exaggerated, but they must not be too remote from it, and it is the task of the actor to endow the character he portrays with some semblance of human nature.

The "machinery" of the farce "works" the characters; the actor must make them.

An actor without humour will never make a successful actor of farce. Although he must be a master of technique, he must also be—and this is most important—a farcical actor by aptitude and inclination. It is true to say that the farcical actor, like the poet, is born—and that both farcical actor and poet must also make themselves by acquiring the knack of making successful use of their respective talents.

The player in farce must be sincere. He must be humorous, yet he cannot learn humour. He must be able to portray trouble, and fear, and worry, and all the other human emotions. This is how he creates interest in the characters—and

it is not easy to be funny and serious and dramatic, all, so to say, in one.

Farce is not pantomime; in which the players can get their effects by mere fooling—in farce they have to be absolutely in earnest, truly dramatic, and able to get all the feeling out of certain scenes—say a love scene. At the same time, the funny sides of the situation have to be brought out with the facility with which the conjurer produces his effects. These, in my opinion, are the elements of success in farcical acting.

Finally, the best way to start to learn to play farce is to play in drama. I learned in dramas and melodramas of the type that used to be played at the old Adelphi and Drury Lane. They are the best material on which to train.

*Ralph Lyne*



# PRODUCING FARCE

By C. B. PURDOM

*Author of "Producing Plays," etc. ; Dramatic Critic ; Founder of Letchworth Players and Welwyn Garden City Theatre ; Hon. Treasurer, National Festival of Community Drama ; Editor of "New Britain"*

PUT farce next to naturalistic plays in order of ease. The latter are plays of real life; farces are plays of topsy-turvy life. Farce is life reversed. In naturalistic plays actual characters in familiar situations are put upon the stage; in farces unreal people in incongruous situations are the subject-matter. Naturalistic plays have the rhythm of life. Farces have the rhythm of the machine. Yet a farce starts with the appearance of life. Ordinary people in ordinary dress in an ordinary setting are what every farce opens with. Such a common form of farce as *When Knights Were Bold* has the appearance of reality, or it would not be funny. The juxtaposition of life and absurdity is what makes farce. Absurdity in itself is not farcical; the farce is in commonplace people getting themselves into absurd situations. The essence of farce is nonsense and unreality. Farce is not merely comic: it is ludicrous. Sense is eliminated. The secret of farcical writing and production is the conviction created in the audience that what is seen on the stage does not happen.

Farce is popular with amateurs for the very reason that it is unlike life; therefore the standards are only stage standards. Farce is easily imitated, for mimicry is a large element in it. Also, farce makes slight demands upon the actors, for the numerous people with gifts of mimicry can excel in it, and it makes no demands whatever upon the audience. Therefore, amateurs who want something very easy to do that will be sure to please their audience depend upon farce. I do not seek to disparage farce, for it has its proper place on the stage; but it must be recognized as an elementary form of drama. I am inclined to think that amateur companies that wish to progress in dramatic art should avoid farce until they have become experienced. Farce is so easy that it makes amateurs think that acting is easy. Easy work means poor work, for it leads to bad habits and mannerisms that are not easily lost.

Farce is a form of comic play; but it differs from comedy in depending wholly on situation, not on character or idea. There is nothing in farce but laughs created by situation. If there is



*Stage Photo Co.*

THE ALDWYCH FARCE, "ROOKERY NOOK"  
WITH TOM WALLS AND MARY BROUGH

comment on life, irony, or philosophy in a play it is not farce. The plays of Aristophanes are not farce, but comedy. Goldsmith wrote comedy, though *She Stoops to Conquer* is often treated as farce. None of Bernard Shaw's plays is farce, though some of his plays often approach it. There is no intellect in farce, and no serious intention; there is wit, not humour; incongruity, but not satire. *The Importance of Being Earnest*

is an example of pure farce. It is one of the few farces that have literary quality, for it has wit, but it is not a play of character or ideas, only a play of situation. The Aldwych farces written by Ben Travers, of which *Plunder* is an example,

producing farce is to set down its scheme of action—it should be plotted out on paper. Take each situation and study its movement and point, make a diagram of the action and how the point is worked up to as mere stage movement, and then



TOM WALLS, J. ROBERTSON HARE, AND RALPH LYNN IN "TURKIFY TIME"

Stage Photo Co.

are in the same succession. The characters are dummies, with the exquisite appearance of real beings, manipulated as marionettes and controlled by the plot. They have no independent existence, and no validity apart from their place in the playwright's scheme.

This indicates how farce should be produced. As I have pointed out before, the style and type of every play determines its production. Farce must not be handled as comedy, for instance. Its mechanistic structure must be worked to. The first thing the producer should do in

how it is worked away from and how the action is built up again. Farce is a pattern of movement, two people, then a third, finally a fourth making a variety of combinations. Entrances must be studied and positions carefully prepared for. Everything depends upon how the stage picture is made up. Unless the actors are in precisely their right places the whole situation is ruined. The movements must be as definite as movements in chess, and must be thought out to the last detail. In farce you cannot leave anything to chance.

There is no need to pay attention to character.

There is none. Give all your attention to position and a well-balanced stage, and get your players neatly on and off. The action must be quick. The audience must not be given any time to think. Cues must be smartly taken up. Get the points made sharply and see that the climax of each act is crystallized. Every farce speeds up as it proceeds, for nearly every farce weakens

actors out of the farcical muddle; but they are an inferior type of play, made tolerable only by the actor's virtuosity.

The actor in farce has to let himself go. He must not show the slightest trace of self-consciousness. If he does, he spoils all. Think of the accomplished farcical actors of recent years, James Welsh, G. P. Huntley, Seymour Hicks, Tom



Stage Photo Co.

MARY BROUGH, RALPH LYNN, WINIFRED SHOTTER, J. ROBERTSON HARE, TOM WALLS, ETHEL COLERIDGE, AND KENNETH KOVE IN "THARK"

from act to act. The form of the play is to set a farcical situation in the first act, to wind it up in the second, and to unwind it in the third. The audience must be given the chance of realizing what the situation is, but after that they must be hurried, for only a farcical writer of genius can handle a farcical situation once he has set it. That is why first-class farces are rare, and why farce is often thinned down into comedy. Many so-called comedies are farces that the author has not the ability to work out in the realm of make-believe. There are hybrid plays known as farcical-comedies, such as *The Man in Dress Clothes*, where sentiment is used to get the char-

Walls, Ralph Lynn, Mary Brough, J. Robertson Hare, and many others, and you have examples of actors who are utterly natural though they do nothing natural. There is something of the droll in every farcical actor, and no one who has not that quality will succeed in this type of play. The temptation in farce is not to know where to stop: that is where the artist comes in. Because it is a simple matter to make audiences laugh, the actor in farce is tempted to take things easily and to use the most obvious and casual means of getting his points. He has but to pull a face or to make a silly gesture and he is instantly rewarded by the response of

the audience. But he cannot repeat this too often; for just as audiences are quickly pleased, so they are quickly made indifferent.

The successful farce consists of one laugh after another. This means that the actor must learn not only to wait for laughs but what to do while

action definite; have bold movements. Think always of effect, not of what is natural. Yet remember that the actors must appear at ease.

Scenery is not important in farce. Everything is concentrated upon the actors. Therefore, the scenery must not be overdone; keep it down in tone



ANOTHER ALDWYCH FARCE, "A CUP OF KINDNESS"

*Stage Photo Co.*

they are taking place. He must not stand blankly. He must not be conscious of what is happening to the audience. He must maintain the situation, and then know how to move on to the next point. This is where the art of the actor is called for, and explains why the mere mimic will never get very far on the farcical stage. Technique is as necessary in these plays as in any others. The rules are: let attention be directed wholly upon the speaking character, and that almost invariably the speaking character is to move. The life of farce is action. Actors who are not speaking must keep still. These rules apply to other plays, but in farce they are of the first importance. Make all

and in style. See that doors and windows are in thoroughly sound working order, however, and that all properties that are used are also in proper order.

Lighting must be bright. Natural lighting does not matter. Get plenty of brilliant light always. Special attention should be paid to dress. It should be smart and correct. There must be no skimping in dress. The women must, if anything, be ultra-smart and in advance of the fashions. There must be taste too, for a farce cannot be too well dressed from any point of view. The men's clothes must be good and up to date. Nothing can make up for dowdy dressing in farce so do not economize in that direction.

## HOW TO USE A PERMANENT SET

By HAL D. STEWART

Author of "Rizzio's Boots," "The Blind Eye," etc.

IT frequently happens that a society wishes to produce a play which presents scenic problems that seem, at first sight, to be well nigh insoluble. But difficulties are made to be overcome, and it is the duty of the designer to eliminate these difficulties as they arise. Although you are an expert draughtsman, although you can produce designs that are both original and beautiful, although you are painstaking to the last degree, you are of little use to the amateur theatre unless you can produce designs that are practical and that overcome the limitations of the stage on which the play is to be produced.

It is impossible to lay down hard and fast rules, because the halls and theatres in which amateurs play vary to an extraordinary extent, and each stage presents its own problems. There are, however, some defects that are fairly common. One of these is the smallness of the stage itself, and, another, lack of accommodation off stage. Frequently, there is little space on the stage, apart from the actual acting area.

When it is required to produce on such a stage a play having a variety of scenes, a way out of the difficulty may be found by making use of a permanent setting. Plates I to IV demonstrate this method.

Plate I shows a photograph of a setting used for a production of *Romeo and Juliet*. It will be seen that this consists of a plain backcloth, in front of which are two rows of arches with three arches in each row. There are also curtains that can be drawn behind the arches. It will be appreciated that by filling in these arches with different pieces of scenery a great variety of scenes can be produced in one permanent setting. Plates II and III demonstrate this variety. In Plate II the curtains are drawn behind the two front side arches, while the rear arches are covered by a wall piece, giving an impression of depth. Plate III shows another variation.

While these three photographs, however, demonstrate the way in which a permanent set-

ting may be employed, they do not solve the problem of lack of off stage space. The arches are wide, and the scenery used in conjunction with them must have been comparatively cumbersome. This will be appreciated by comparing the scenery with the figures in the photographs.

Plate IV shows a permanent setting that is likely to be of greater interest to the amateur society working on a small stage. This photograph is a scene from *Scott of Abbotsford*, by W. E. Gunn, which was produced for the Scottish National Players by W. G. Fay.

*Scott of Abbotsford*, an episodic play dealing with the life of Sir Walter Scott, is in six scenes. These are, a drawing room in a country mansion; a library in Scott's house in Edinburgh; the breakfast room at Abbotsford; a room in rather a humble house in Edinburgh; an Edinburgh street; and a banqueting hall. It will probably be agreed, therefore, that an ideal presentation of this play would call for six different sets of scenery. This was out of the question owing to the rather unusual limitations of the stage on which the play was produced, and it was decided that the solution lay in working with one permanent set.

It will be noticed, however, that the scenes, by their nature, present two problems to the designer of a permanent set for this play. It would seem at first sight difficult to execute a design equally suitable for two such dissimilar scenes as a street and a banqueting hall. At the same time, three of the other scenes present a further problem by reason of their similarity. How is it possible without change of scenery to make a sufficient difference to show that three interiors of much the same class belong to three different houses?

Actually, the solution was both simple and ingenious. The set used was an ordinary box set, silver grey in colour, with three arched openings at the back, and one in each side wall. A photograph does not give a wholly satisfactory impression, but Plate IV shows that the arches in this case

were relatively small, and therefore the flats used to fill them were light and easily handled, compared with the flats used in the *Romeo and Juliet* production.

So far as the scenery was concerned, the character of the scene was established by means of the

painted bookshelves, and in the thickness of the arches, below these bookshelves, were cupboards, about thirty inches in height, on the top of which lay books and other small properties.

For the exterior scene the centre arch was again a window, with drawn blind, seen this time



PLATE I

Photo by Pollard Crouther

"ROMEO AND JULIET"

flats used to fill the rear arches. The side arches were filled by solid wooden doors throughout. In spite of this, the character of the scene was completely altered by these differences in the back wall.

For example, for the first scene—the drawing room of a country mansion—the centre arch was filled with a practical French window, and the side arches also by windows, through which a garden backcloth was seen. For the town house the French window gave place to a smaller window with blind and heavy curtains, while the arches on either side were backed by flats with

from the outside, and the door at the right was the exterior of the front door of the house. Above it was a hanging lamp. This, with the light shining through the blind, was almost the only lighting used, as the scene was short, and took place at night.

Lighting, of course, played an important part in establishing the necessary variations, which the difference in the furniture completed.

A great deal of furniture was necessary, and this admittedly took some time to set and strike, but this was more than compensated by the ease and speed with which the alterations to the



scenery were effected, none of the flats being more than seven feet in height, and all being quite a simple type of permanent set, which is possible on almost any stage.

Another difficulty that frequently arises occurs whenever a change has to be made from an interior to an exterior set, or vice versa. There is no doubt that an actual ceiling cloth is the best way of masking the top of an interior set. The use of borders for this purpose is, or at least was, an accepted convention, but borders are now rarely used in conjunction with an interior set in a West End production, and audiences are, therefore, not so ready to accept this convention as they used to be.

In exterior settings borders



PLATE II  
"ROMEO AND JULIET"

Photo by Pollard Crowther

easily handled. Actually, the changes were made well within the allotted time, which was by no means liberal.

I have described this setting for *Scott of Abbotsford* in detail, because I believe that it affords an excellent example of one way in which the amateur society can overcome the difficulties of presenting a play with many different scenes on a small stage.

There are, of course, many different varieties of permanent settings, some of them extremely elaborate and expensive, and some, such as those used by Komisarjevsky in *Grand Hotel* and *Hatter's Castle*, involving the use of a solidly-built structure with scenes set above each other. These are of little interest to the society playing on a small stage with possibly little head room, but the description of the scenery for *Scott of Abbotsford* shows the possibility of making use of



PLATE III  
"ROMEO AND JULIET"

Photo by Pollard Crowther

must still be used, unless the theatre possesses a cyclorama.

Here, then, is the problem. The designer wishes to use a ceiling cloth for his interior scene and borders for his exterior: how is this change to be effected? Borders are hung from battens, which are suspended across the stage parallel to the footlights. The ceiling cloth is nailed to a

rectangular frame, which is lowered on to the top of the set. Obviously, therefore, before the borders can be lowered into position the ceiling must be removed. How?

To take it down and dismantle it is out of the

and allow the ceiling to hang down, covering the back wall of the stage, and to lower the back-cloth in front of it. This takes time, however, and the designer must consider whether, taking all factors into consideration, it is worth doing



PLATE IV

*By kind permission of The Bulletin, Glasgow*

SETTING FOR "SCOTT OF ABBOTSFORD," BY W. E. GUNN, PRODUCED BY W. G. FAY FOR  
THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL PLAYERS

question. This would be a long and tedious process. If there is sufficient height, however, the ceiling can be lowered, the lines on the front edge, or the back edge, removed, and the ceiling hauled up out of sight to hang perpendicularly from one set of lines. To do this, however, the distance from the top of the proscenium arch to the roof, or grid, must be greater than the width of the ceiling from back to front. If this is not the case, the best plan is to remove the front set of lines

this, or whether it would be better to dispense with the ceiling altogether, and use borders for both sets.

In a permanent set it is generally advisable to use borders if there are exterior and interior scenes. In the case of *Scott of Abbotsford*, it was possible to use a ceiling because the one exterior scene was dimly lit.

Obviously, there can be no change from borders to ceiling with a permanent set.



## “THE PLACE”—SIGHT LINES

By F. E. DORAN

*Secretary, Manchester Playgoers' Club*

THERE are certain first rules of play production that must be observed no matter what type of performance is being offered. I am assuming that the producer has made up his mind as to what he is going to do with the author's play, and that he now considers all the means to that end. He will have a theatre, maybe a hall, perhaps a schoolroom, even a large room in a private house, and it is obvious that what suits one does not suit another. But there is one first principle common to all. Every member of the audience, from the man right at the very back of the (we hope) crowded gallery, to the man at the side of the stalls, has a right to see and hear everything relevant that happens on the stage. When I say, everything, I mean *everything*, and it is the producer's job to arrange every detail so that all relevant matters occur within everybody's sight lines.

Now it does not matter whether the show is in theatre, hall, schoolroom, barn, or house, it is possible to plan in advance and to work to inches. It means trouble and perhaps a certain amount of fussiness, but the result is well worth it. It is simply a matter of foresight and preparing the way. Recognition of the fact that in all play production a certain amount of mechanical and calculating skill is involved leads one to suggest the adoption of workshop and lay-out methods by putting down on paper all the factors of the problem.

One of the most important factors in a situation where all factors are important is “the place” of production. In amateur work, producers have to cope with difficulties that would drive a first-class producer crazy, and it is highly creditable how amateurs manage to fit their shows on to the nooks and crannies sometimes given them for a stage. Consideration of the following methods may supply something that eliminates chance, which, though it produces exciting moments, does not tend to produce a smooth performance. Remember we have to consider the

audience—the people who pay to see our work, and it is right that the amateur producer should take every care to see that they get value for money. One of these values is the right to see everything that goes on, or, if it is a very modern play with a bedroom scene, everything that comes off.

It is not possible to plan a show so that it will automatically expand and contract in such a way

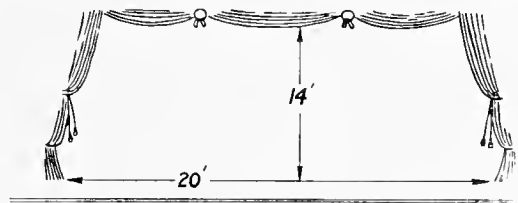


FIG. 1

that it will fit stages of all sizes at all times. Producers utilizing the same stage over and over again soon get to know the blind spots, but sometimes, in fact nearly always, the actual stage is

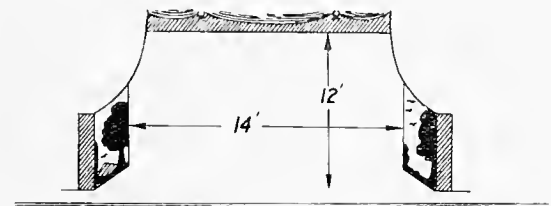


FIG. 2

not seen until the dress rehearsal. In these circumstances the following methods of production provide a good basis for working.

For a travelling show there is the old and well-known device of the false proscenium. I will describe this. Briefly, it means that the producer estimates the smallest stage area on which he will have to work, and designs his sets and regulates

his cast movements accordingly. He works to that limit, no matter how big the stage may be on which his cast appears. Then he fills in the space between his own sets and the real proscenium opening with an invisible frame—invisible in the sense that it is unobtrusive—usually of black or dark grey. This frame or false proscenium can be either flats or curtains. Curtains are better, as they are easier to handle.

Now to consider "the place."

Methods suitable for one place are totally wrong or inadequate in another. That is why academic and pedantic producers should be chary about reproducing Greek Tragedy in the local church hall. Size of hall and stage is the first consideration, and the producer should leave NOTHING to chance. "It will be all right on the night" is a false allure. It is the rock on which hundreds of honourable careers have been smashed. It "CAN" be all right if care is taken and the producer knows what he is doing. Having carefully read his play and satisfied himself that he thoroughly and honestly knows what his author is trying to say, he sets about creating the right atmosphere in terms of shape and colour. He has

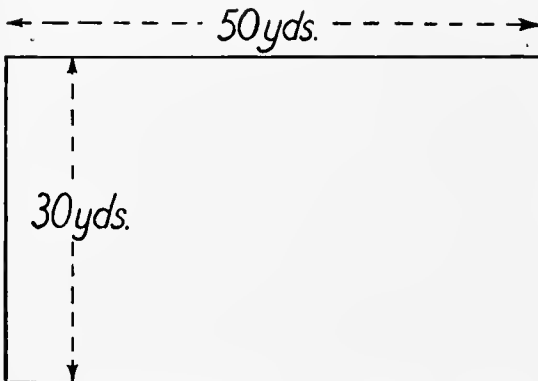


FIG. 3

as his medium scenery, whether painted or plain, curtains, properties, furniture, dresses, lighting, orchestral music, and so on. A small stage in a small hall, or its opposite, has to be considered as

part of the general plan. The producer should therefore make a scale drawing of his stage in plan and elevation, bringing into it the simple elements of length and width of hall, say 50 yd. by 30 yd.

A convenient scale is  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. to the foot, so the sketch below would be enlarged to 150 ft. = 150 quarter inches or  $37\frac{1}{2}$  in. on the long side and 90 ft. = 90 quarter inches or  $22\frac{1}{2}$  in. on the short side. Now make a scale of the elevation thus—

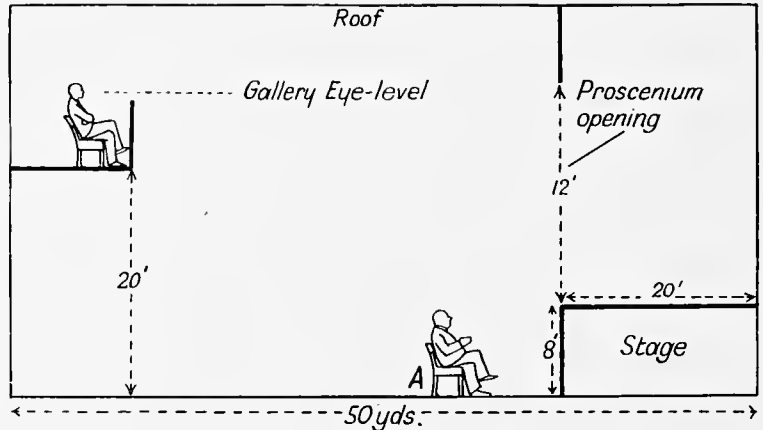


FIG. 4

Your stage scale must be very exact, as it will govern the movements of your cast. This plan, when properly extended, would give you a drawing showing, hall length  $37\frac{1}{2}$  in., eye level in gallery say 24 ft. or 6 in., the stage height 2 in.

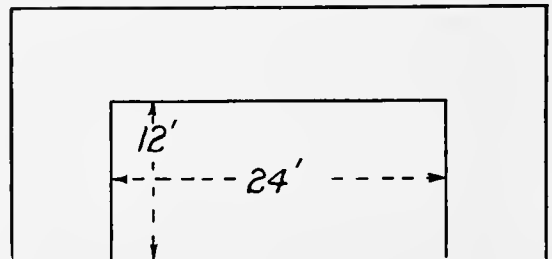


FIG. 5

and the depth 5 in., proscenium opening 12 ft. or 3 in. These measurements in relation to the eye level of the gallery and the height of the floor of the stage are most important, as with them the producer can state to an inch the height of such things as walls, etc., or the depth to which flies and battens should be dropped to hide them from the little round gentleman so vigorously applauding

these abstract figures. I call these measurements "sight angles" and when once these, and those in Fig. 5, are properly grasped, the producer has information as elementary but as necessary and valuable as the multiplication table to an accountant. Now for Fig. 5, which is the ground plan of the stage, and should be on as large a scale as convenient, but I will keep to  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. to the foot, for clearness' sake. Our stage, according to Fig. 4, is 20 ft. deep; now its proscenium width is as Fig. 5, or 24 ft. Now consider Fig. 3

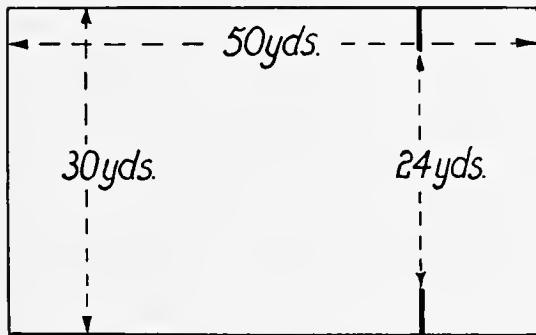


FIG. 6

plus the proscenium opening width (see Fig. 7).  $A_1$  and  $A_2$  represent two paying members of the audience. They have paid to see and hear everything of import on the stage. Get a straight-edge

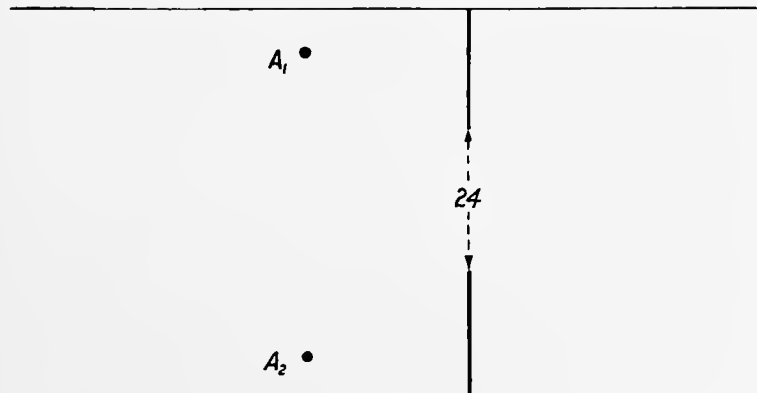


FIG. 7

rule and make a good straight line along the sight line of Messrs.  $A_1$  and  $A_2$ , whom I will now de-twin,

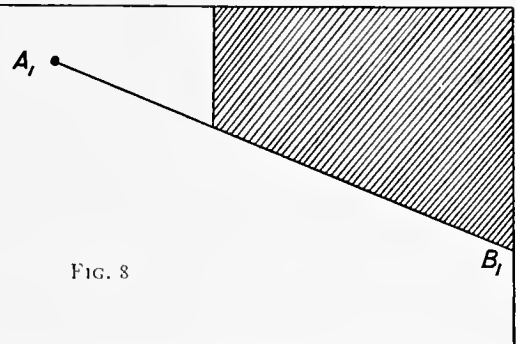


FIG. 8

as what happens to one will happen to the other. All that is in the shaded space is invisible to Mr.

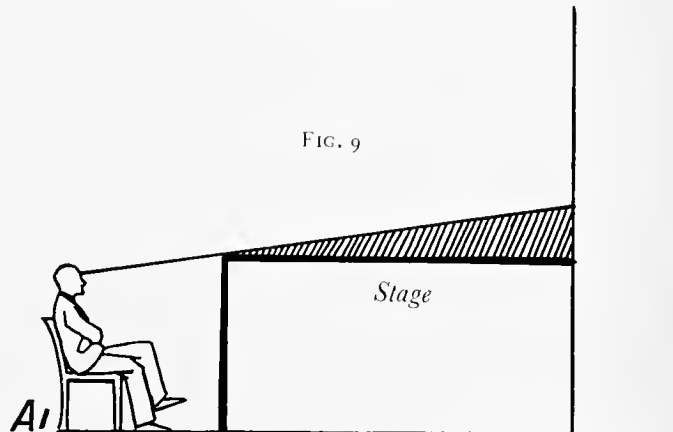


FIG. 9

$A_1$ , so scenery must be designed to show all relevant action and props. on the footlight side of the line  $A_1$ - $B_1$ , Fig. 8.

The same system of triangulation as the pedants would call it is now applied to the centre stalls (or are these the wonderful and unpronounceable fauteuils, horrible word?), (Fig. 9), from which it will be seen that a wall top or ship's side must be taller than the shaded part, at any given point. (For purposes of simplification I am not confusing the drawings by dealing with a stage rake.)

Likewise some gallery friend, ever loyal and better playgoer than most, must be regarded (1 does not mask the all-important drawer where the villain has hidden the secret plans.

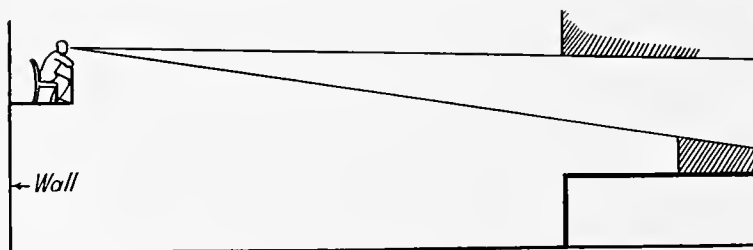


FIG. 10

feel here he should have come first), so that if you have to have confusion behind the wall, you must see that the height of the wall will prevent our gallant gallery man seeing more than is good for his artistic enjoyment.

Now the gallery plan wants a few lines (Fig. 11). Lines  $B_2-3$  and  $B_1-4$  will give you side angles for the gallery and then line A (Fig. 12) will show you just where your flies will go to hide your battens from a casual glance upwards, a glance always likely, and if details are not right, always destructive of illusion. The old hand's injunction to "jine yer flats" can be well extended to "hide your lights," if not under a bushel, at least with the borders and skypieces designed for the purpose.

Now refer again to Figs. 8 and 11. A plan like

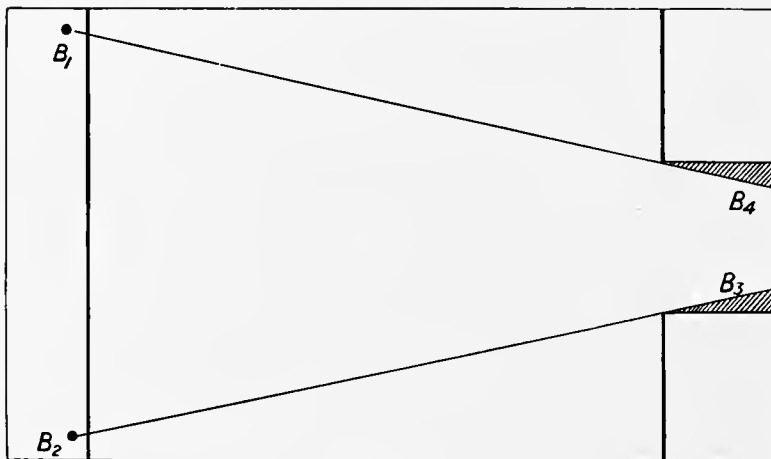


FIG. 11

this, to scale, can tell you how big your furniture should be, and where to place the settee so that it

All these details may seem pedantic and fussy, but no producer worth his salt can ignore the principles on which they are based, and which they help to apply. These principles, remember, are that the audience must see and hear everything of dramatic import.

Plans of Figs. 8 and 11 can be placed flat on a table and pieces of cardboard, cut to shape and scale, can be

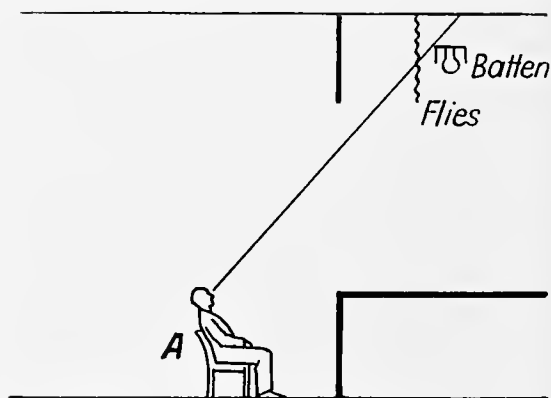


FIG. 12

moved like draughtsmen from place to place until each piece is right. Eliminate all other chairs and things likely to clog the movement of your cast. Give them plenty of room.

The cast should have access to these plans so that pacing can be gauged in theory, though if rehearsals are properly organized, the plans will be of preliminary value only; nothing beats the actual pacing with life size props and settings.

These plans and measurements are merely preparatory, and if done early enough, will save a lot of wasted time at rehearsals proper.

## THE THREE EDWARDS

By NEVIL TRUMAN

*Hon. Secretary, Nottingham Playgoers' Club*

**T** IRED of the voluminous and clumsy garments of the past age, men revolted during the reigns of the three Edwards, and adopted a closely cut, tight fitting costume. Women, too, had their own rebellion, this time in the matter of the hair, which had been carefully hidden from view. They displayed it to the public admiration, and their choice of gowns became more beautiful with the greater facilities of range now offered. The sumptuary laws were enacted in 1363 and were a curious attempt to control personal extravagance. Their enforcement was not altogether a success.

### DRESS (EDWARD I)

The *Cotehardie* (men) was the new mode. It was a close fitting garment like a coat. It reached to the knees and was fastened by a waist belt. Its front was slit and fastened with buttons and a row of buttons fastened the sleeves from elbow to wrist. The sleeves were closely fitted to the arm and at the elbow a long hanging sleeve fell nearly to the ground. It could be bordered with fur.

The *Surcoat* (men) was the same as before, but heraldic designs appeared upon it in embroidered work.

*Tights* (men) were worn with the cotehardie, and the effect was quite different from the previous reign, the men wearing a clean-cut sparse costume.

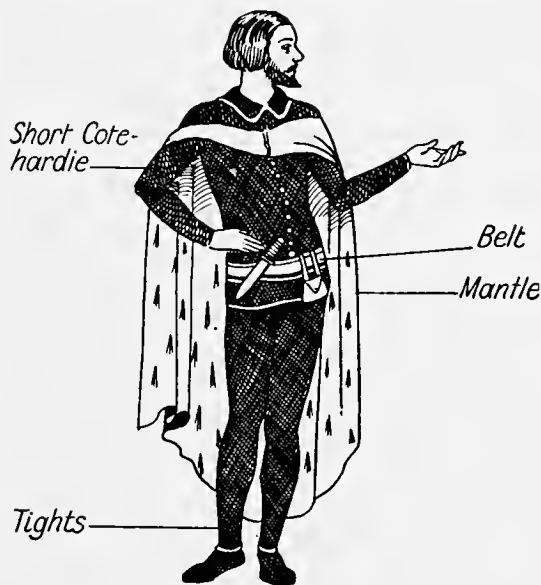
The *Mantle* (men and women) alone remained in generous width and length as of old.

The *Kirtle* (women) closely fitted the body and was often laced, with tight sleeves buttoned from elbow to wrist. Over it was

The *Loose Gown* (women), of a different colour from the kirtle but with a lining that matched the kirtle. Its sleeves were quite long and loose, and there could be a train. It was confined by

The *Girdle*, which was slung from the hips. The over-gown was pulled through the girdle

in front so as to show the kirtle. A two-colour effect was given by the combined frocks—one shade for kirtle, skirt front and sleeves, and gown lining, the other for the gown exterior.



MAN—EDWARD III

### DRESS (EDWARD II AND III)

The *Cotehardie* (men) was the same, but was parti-coloured vertically.

The *Belt* carried a pouch and dagger.

The *Cape* (men) was either long or short as taste dictated. It was edged and collared in fur, and buttoned at the neck.

The *Full Gown* (women) was the same as before, except that *Tippets* were worn from 1350 to 1380. These were long strips of cloth or fur fastened just above the elbow to the sleeves. Before these came in the sleeves were wide and long.

The *Kirtle* (women) was worn under the gown as before.

The *Cyclas* (women) was used in Edward II's

reign only, and was a tight surcoat. It was shorter in front than behind, and had no sleeves.

#### LEGS

*Tights* (men), which were parti-coloured to match the cotehardie, gave great prominence to the legs. This bi-colouration was either by way



A LADY, 1350-60

of a single colour to each leg or the two shades were combined on each leg, vertically divided. The shades must alternate with those of the cotehardie, i.e. if the latter is red on the right and green on the left, then the tights must be green on the right and red on the left. It was a fashion that no doubt owed its inspiration to the growing popularity of heraldry. We have already noted that coats of arms began to adorn the surcoat in Edward I's reign.

These parti-coloured tights came in during the reigns of Edward II and Edward III only.

#### FEET

Dark leather shoes with longer points than before were worn by men and women, the latter's being less sharp.

#### HAIR

The men's hair was long and bushy in Edward I's time. During Edward II's and III's reigns it

was still bushy, but was cut round and curled. Faces were clean shaven, but old men wore a beard parted into two curling points.

The women's hair in Edward I's time was parted in the middle and bunched on either side of the face in a bag or net, and was dressed over the ears.

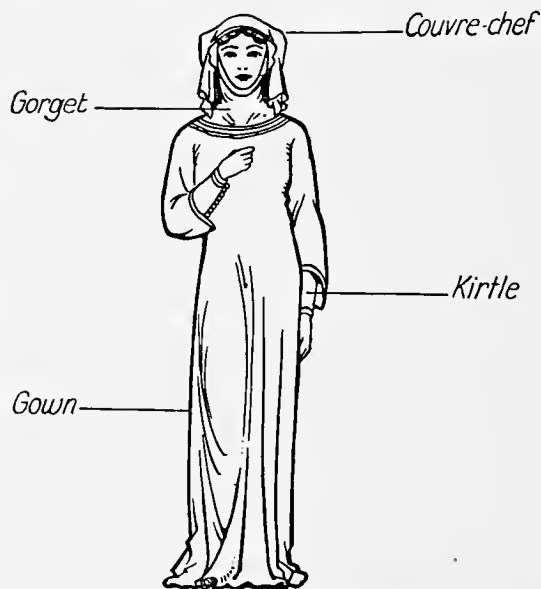
In the time of Edward II and Edward III girls wore two plaits and placed the gorget under them. The women of this date still wore the hair in side nets.

#### HATS (EDWARD I)

The *Beaver* (men) was a hat with a turned up brim and a tall crown with a somewhat ridiculous feather in front. It was placed on top of

The *Hood* or *Capuchon* (men), which was the same as before, except that

The *Liripipe* (men) was now part of it. This was an exaggeration of the original peak to the



LADY DE COBHAM, 1320 (COBHAM)

hood, and attained a great length. A good general length is sufficient to drop on the shoulder, though it was often so long that it could be wound round the neck like a scarf.

The beaver hat was optional. If worn, it should be in conjunction with the hood.

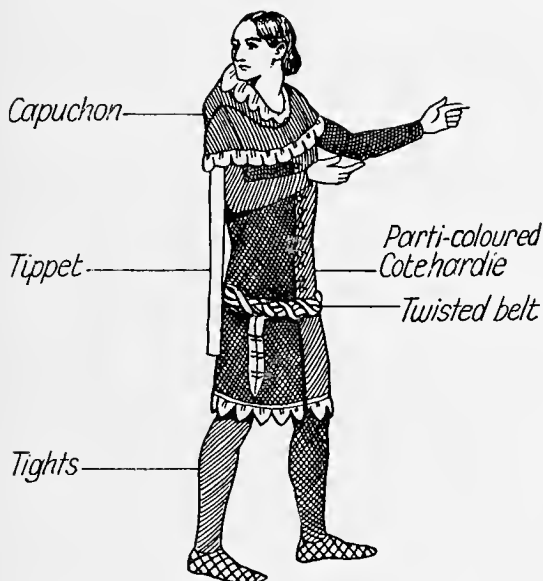
The *Gorget* (women) is another name for the

chin band, which was a linen band drawn over the head, with another under the chin.

The *Wimple* (women) remained as before but was now worn by the older women. Also it was now dyed yellow.

*Caps* were endless in variety, a popular one being

The *Spanish Turban* (women), in which the



MAN, ABOUT 1350

forehead band was widened and stiffened, not unlike the modern Russian tiara one sees in pictures of the massacred Russian Royal Family.

#### HATS (EDWARD III)

The men had the liripipe attached to the hood, as before, but it was longer. It was even longer than floor length, in which case it was knotted to clear the floor, or was wound round the head, with the end tucked in or draped about the shoulders. It was in this case a scarf attached to a hat.

The women wore gorget and wimple of fine lawn. Silk ribbon fillets bound round the brow were popular, as were also the side nets for the hair as before, the nets being made in gold work and jewelled.

#### PEASANTS

The peasants still remained much the same, but the Sumptuary Laws checked any originality in costume as far as they were concerned, and no

peasant wore fur. The materials for his dresses were mostly coarse grained cloth, chiefly brown.

#### SCALLOPS

To all garments of this period "dagging" was done. This consisted of scalloping or cutting the edges of the clothes into points, semicircles, or irregular pieces resembling leaves.

#### MEN (EDWARD I)

##### Dress

Cotehardie—tight knee-length coat. Tight sleeves with strip from elbow to ground attached. Belt.

Surcoat—now heraldic.

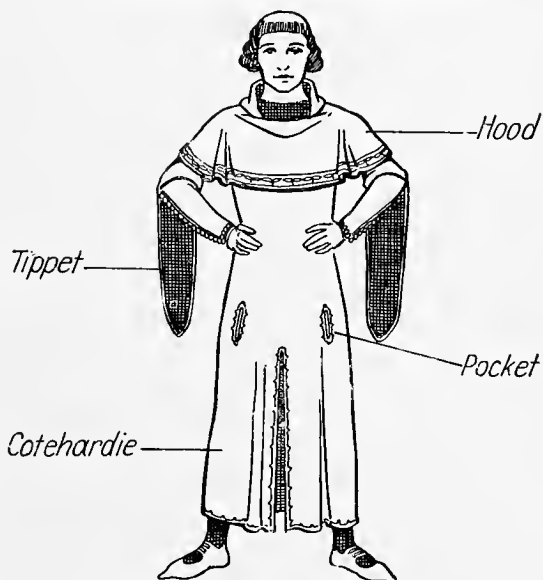
Mantle—still long.

##### Legs

Tights.

##### Feet

Dark leather shoes, with longer points.



ALAN FLEMING, 1361 (NEWARK)

##### Hair

Long and bushy.

##### Hats

Beaver with turn up brim, tall crown, feather.

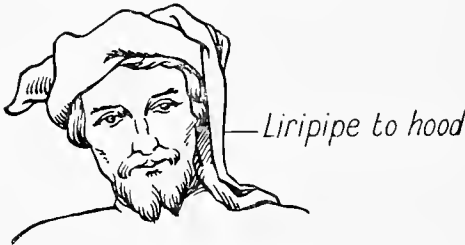
Hood or capuchon with liripipe, with or without beaver top.

## WOMEN (EDWARD I)

*Dress*

Kirtle—close fit, laced, long tight sleeves, buttoned from elbow to wrist.

Loose gown—over the above. Train. Long hanging sleeves. Lined.



EARLY CHAPERON

Girdle—on hips. Gown pulled up in front to show kirtle.

Mantle.

*Feet*

Shoes less pointed than men's.

*Hair*

Parted middle, over ears in bunches.

*Hats*

Gorget and fillet—linen band on head and under chin.

Wimple—added for older women, coloured yellow.

Caps—endless.

Couvre-chef—a veil.

Spanish turban with stiff band on forehead.



SIDE NET CAP

## MEN (EDWARD II AND III)

*Dress*

Cotehardie—parti-coloured, with tippets.

Belt at waist with pouch and dagger.

Capes—long or short. Collar and edge furred.

Buttons at neck.

*Legs*

Tights now parti-coloured.

*Hair*

Bushy, cut round, curled. Clean shaven. Old men wore biforked beards.



SPANISH TURBAN, 1300 (LINCOLN)

*Hats*

Liripipe to hood.

## WOMEN (EDWARD II AND III)

*Dress*

Cotehardie—long gored skirt, tight sleeves, back laced, hip belt, low neck, not parti-coloured.

Super cotehardie—long, loose, sleeveless, large armholes.

Full gown—sometimes trained, with tippets—long strips—and wide elbow sleeves, over a

Kirtle—tight sleeves.

Cyclas—tight sleeveless surcoat, shorter in front (Edward II only).

*Hair*

Girls—two braids, gorget under them.

Women—two side bunches netted.

*Hats*

Gorget and wimple of fine lawn.

Silk ribbon fillets.

Gold side nets.

Couvre-chef—a veil.



MAN'S BEAVER HAT



# THE PREPARATION AND USES OF CRÊPE-HAIR

By ALFRED HARTOP

*Perruquier and Lecturer to Amateur Societies*

OF the various arts that are supplementary to theatrical make-up, postiche—the art of the wig-maker—is of supreme importance. The addition of false hair in the shape of the wig, moustache, or beard, often alters the appearance and demeanour of an individual almost beyond recognition, and plays an important part in pageantry and historical plays. A moustache, beard, or wig, singly or in combination, can be, and often is, the deciding factor in the creation and accurate presentation of a character part; the design and colour of the hair identifies, determines, or completes the character.

Mr. Cedric Hardwicke, in his introduction, relates how an old wig was the inspiration that led to the pictorial development of Churdles Ash in *The Farmer's Wife*.

Moustaches and beards are made and obtainable, in various forms, ready for fixing, the simplest combined form being constructed on a wire frame, or elastic threads, to fit over the ears for support. These, however, being most unnatural in appearance, are unsuitable for anything but slap-stick comedy. The most natural looking forms have the hair woven on to a foundation of flesh-coloured silk gauze and require to be stuck on the face with spirit gum. Though of excellent appearance, they invariably cause a feeling of stiffness about the jaws that is often detrimental to correct enunciation and freedom of facial expression.

For economy, easy application, comfort in wear, and general good service, there is nothing better for building moustaches, side whiskers, short beards, etc., than what is known as crêpe-hair, applied directly on to the face. Crêpe-hair is manufactured from coarse wool or hair of long fibre, such as mohair, horsehair, or oxford hair. The hair, is scoured, combed, dyed, and mixed, then spun and plaited into the form of long ropes. The

plaiting is done tightly on two strands of thin string, and has the effect of crimping the hair, which retains this crimped or crêpe impression after it is released from the binding strings. It is made in a variety of serviceable solid colours, also in a range of black-grey and brown-grey mixture shades, all of which are sold by the yard in rope form. When seen on the face at a moderate distance, crêpe-hair closely resembles human hair, whilst its easy manipulation and adaptability are a boon to the make-up artist.

Before I explain actual uses and application, it will be helpful to consider the preparation of crêpe-hair from the rope to a condition that is more suitable for shaping into moustaches and beards—a process that requires a little skill that can only be acquired with practice. To assist the preparatory process at least two spring paper clips, 2½ in. or 3 in. wide, are needed, also, for shaping and trimming, a comb and a pair of scissors, preferably the kind used by hairdressers.

Your attention is directed to Fig. 15, which is a photo of actual portions of crêpe-hair at different stages of preparation, together with a few examples of moustaches made from the same hair. Sample A is a portion of hair rope; part of the hair has been released from the plaiting strings to show its fluffy and crimped appearance.

To prepare, begin by cutting a piece of rope 6 in. long. This will provide 12 in. to 16 in. of prepared hair, according to the amount of crimp left in. Remove the plaiting strings by cutting them at short intervals to avoid damage to the hair. Now, with the finger and thumb, gently tease out the hair at one end to a width of about 2½ in., and insert this end into the jaws of one of the spring clips, taking care that all the fibres are gripped (Fig. 14). In opening out a rope it is important to get a correct start. This is best achieved by causing the crimps to side-slip (in a

manner similar to opening a fan), the fibres being evenly separated. Be careful to avoid a fracture. Once the opening out is started in this way it is a fairly simple matter to separate the entire length by working away from the clip a few inches at a time, keeping the crimps horizontally straight and the fibres parallel. As soon as the opposite end is reached secure the fibre ends with another clip

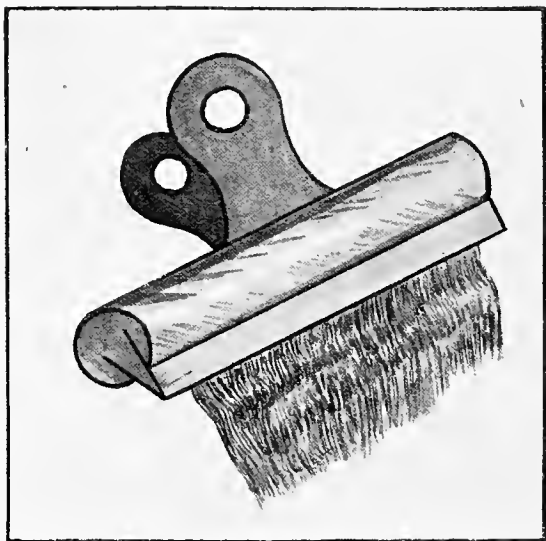


FIG. 14

to prevent any of them going astray when tension is applied to reduce the excessive crimp.

At this stage the hair should have an appearance corresponding to sample *B*. The next step is to reduce the amount of crimp to a semblance of human hair. Either thoroughly damp the hair, stretch the two clips apart to the extent of 12 in., secure the clips to a board or table with pins, and leave overnight to dry and set, or pin the clips to the board without damping the hair, cover with a damp cloth, and with a hot iron steam the hair without applying any pressure, which would unduly flatten it.

After stretching and setting the hair the clips can be removed. The hair will then be somewhat straighter, resembling sample *C*, and in the best condition for shaping into any required form. It is usually best to allow a small amount of crimp to remain. This has the effect of interlocking the fibres, whereas if the hair is set perfectly straight the fibres have a tendency to separate and fray

when they are cut to a short length. When short portions are required, they should be pulled and broken from the prepared length, instead of cut off. This method provides a tapering end, which is often required for moustaches and pointed beards. Sample *D* illustrates such a broken piece, which has been teased to its noticeable fullness with a comb.

It is always advisable to anticipate the need to use hair in a make-up and to have it prepared. Guidance in the selection of shades is necessary. If a false moustache or beard is required to match the natural colour of the head, a crêpe-hair somewhat lighter than the natural hair will be needed. It must be taken into account that crêpe-hair does not reflect light to the same degree as natural hair does. Therefore, if the two match in daylight it may be surmised that the false hair will appear much darker on a well-lighted stage. Allowance should also be made for the fact that facial hair is generally lighter than that of the head, so that a false moustache or beard should actually be considerably lighter than the natural hair on the head to make sufficient allowance for these two factors. Obviously, the best place to decide on the right shade is on the stage; otherwise, judgment must be based upon the points just mentioned. If the natural hair is slightly grey, or has been made to appear so with make-up, it can be matched with a grey mixture crêpe-hair from the ranges of black-grey or brown-grey. The brown-grey shades have a fine, soft appearance and are to be preferred if the natural hair has these characteristics, whilst the black-grey is more appropriately used to suggest a strong, wiry growth. Except for dark-skinned characters, such as Negroes, Moors, and some Spanish and Jewish types, the use of black crêpe-hair should be avoided, as when it is in contrast with a pale skin the effect is altogether too bizarre. When it is desired to suggest a black moustache or beard, it is sufficient to use dark brown or reddish-brown; either will be dark enough to match jet black natural hair.

To make a moustache the prepared hair can be used either horizontally or vertically; that is to say, the fibres may run from the centre of the lip outwards to the mouth corners (as seen at *E*), or run downwards from the nose to the edge of the lip (see *F*). Type *E* is made by separating a strand of suitable thickness and by breaking or cutting a

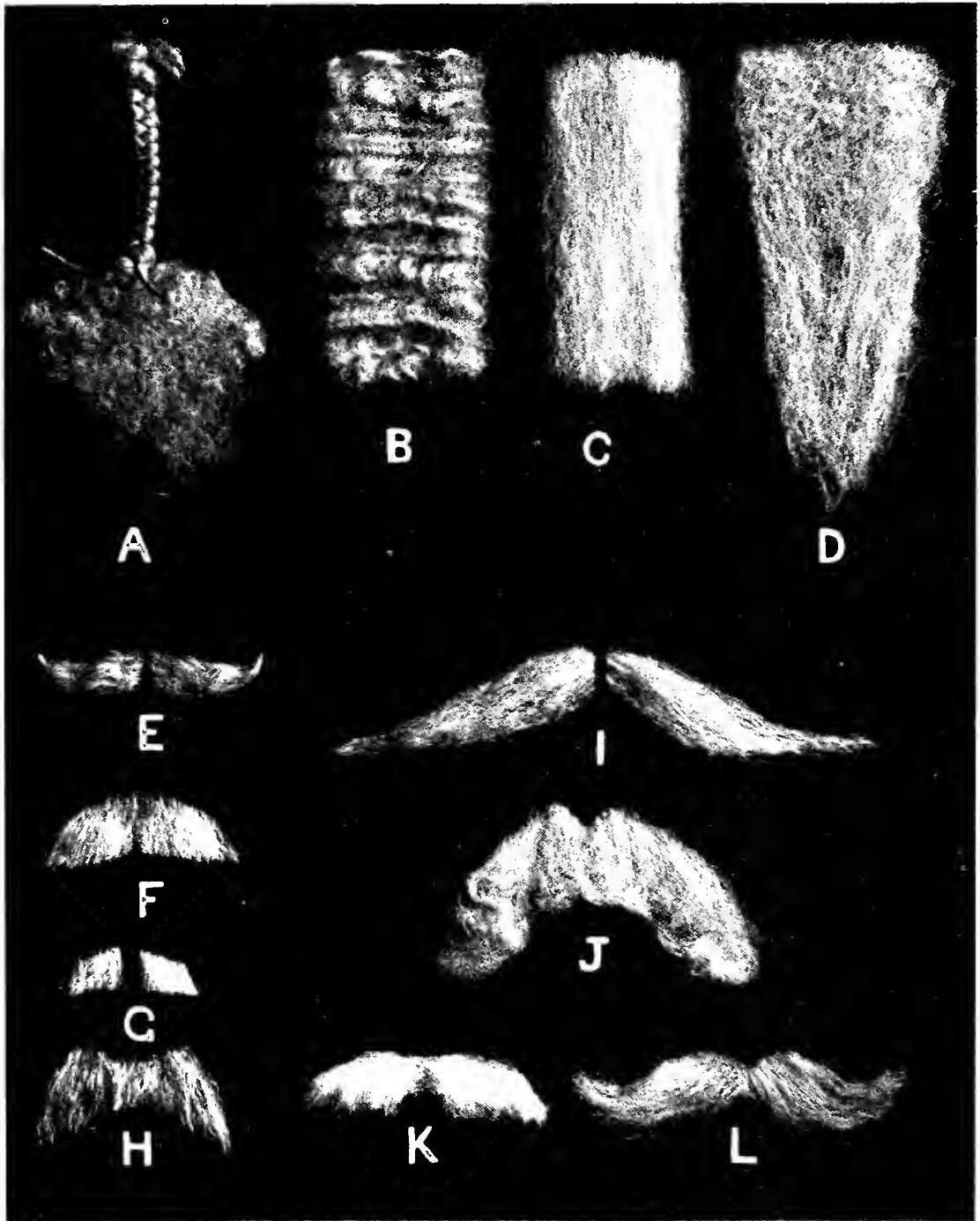


FIG. 15. CRÊPE-HAIR, FOR MAKING MOUSTACHES, BEARDS, ETC.

strand  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. long. Roll the strand between the palms to make it compact, then broaden it at the centre, and point the ends by twisting with the finger and thumb. Trim the ends off to match, and cut in two exactly at the centre to make a parting, so that a tight lip is avoided. To fix the moustache to the lip whole would result in a tight lip. It is most important that, before fixing, the two edges of the centre cutting should be thinned at the back so that the end of every fibre may be pressed into contact with the fixing gum, and thus held fast. Types of moustaches, like *F*, *G*, and *H*, are made by cutting a bunch of hair, an inch or more long, which is spread open evenly to the width of the lip, and then shaped with the scissors along the top edge, the lower edge being trimmed to the correct length and shape after fixing to the lip. Do not overlook the thinning of the fibres at the back of the top edge before gumming down. Too much stress cannot be laid on the point that the edge of the back layer of fibres should be cut a trifle shorter to form a chisel edge, so that the surface layer may override and adhere to the skin. This applies to all cases where raw cut edges, whether moustaches or beard, have to make contact with the skin. Adoption of this method obviates the risk of edges fraying loose or possibly the whole becoming entirely detached from the face.

Spirit gum or "fixing gum" is required for attaching crêpe-hair, or foundation moustaches, whiskers, beards, etc., to the face. Composed of resinous material dissolved in spirit, it dries rapidly and causes the hair to adhere firmly to the face, though not so tenaciously as to render the removal of the hair difficult when it is no longer required. Spirit gum may be obtained in conical metal containers with a screw stopper with a brush attached. The brush after being immersed in the gum is always ready for use. Spirit gum is also sold in small glass bottles, with or without brush. Pale spirit varnish, often used in place of spirit gum is a satisfactory and an inexpensive substitute. It should be remembered that spirit gum or varnish will not stick anything to a greasy surface. Therefore, the facial make-up must be completed and powdered, and then the parts where hair pieces are to be fixed must be wiped free from grease paint before spirit gum is applied.

To fix a moustache, for instance, the hair

having been shaped to the required style in readiness, apply spirit gum to the exact parts of the lip that will be covered with the hair, and allow a few moments for the spirit to evaporate. This will cause the gum to become tacky. Then place the two sections of the moustache into position, leaving a slight triangular space in the centre between them, and press on to the gum with a damp sponge, or towel, until the gum dries and the hair is properly adhered along its full length. This will take only a few moments. Unless care is exercised during the fixing process, gum and hair may stick to the fingers and ruin a piece of good work. Therefore, keep the fingers moist and always use a damp sponge, or towel, for pressing down the hair.

Types of moustaches are so numerous and yet so personal and suggestive in their effect that adequate classification is impossible. Who has not heard of the "Kaiser" moustache, the "Old Bill," "Charlie Chaplin," or "Ronald Colman" type? Guidance is best obtained by the observation and comparison of types of natural growth in living or pictorial form. Almost any natural growth can be imitated, and imaginary types can be devised and executed in crêpe-hair, following the selection and manipulation of suitable hair pieces. Use the hair to the best advantage, and do not be niggardly with it; if a piece fails to meet the case, scrap it and start again.

Small tooth-brush and finely trimmed types present the most difficulty, though they can be produced by handling the crêpe-hair in a different way from that already described. As a preliminary, clip off a small quantity of short fibres and clean every trace of grease from the moustache area of the lip. Using brown-water cosmetic or water-colour, paint the required shape of moustache on the lip, and allow it to dry. Then paint exactly over the shape with spirit gum, and when this is almost dry dab on the chopped hair with a light hand until the shape is re-formed with hair. The result as seen by an audience is difficult to distinguish from a natural growth.

Samples *K* and *L* represent moustaches built up on a gauze foundation, shaped ready for fixing. This form is, generally speaking, the most natural looking, and may be used a number of times if it is handled with reasonable care. Cut the foundation in halves, and fix with spirit gum.

## LIGHTING APPARATUS

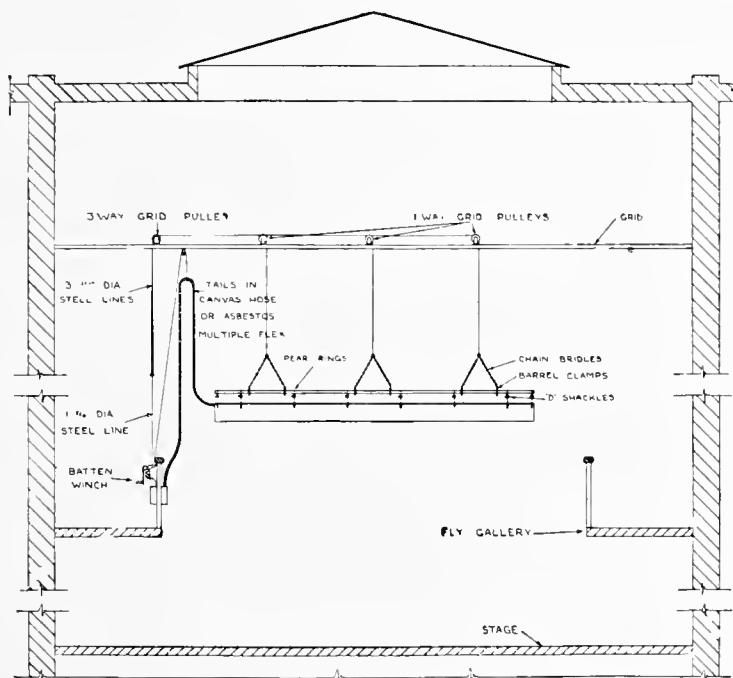
By C. HAROLD RIDGE, A.R.S.M., D.I.C., and F. S. ALDRED, A.M.Inst.C.E.

*Consulting Engineers*

**B**ATTENS are suspended from the grid by steel lines varying in number from two to four, according to the size of stage. For small light-weight battens the steel lines may be directly attached to a barrel, but in other cases it is usual to use bridle chains, as shown in Fig. 25,

and are attached to horse-shoes on the batten itself by means of bolts passed through both pear-ring and horse-shoe.

The winches should be of the self-sustaining variety so that if the handle is released by accident the batten will not crash on to the stage. Move-



*The Strand Electric Co.*

FIG. 25

to distribute the pull and to prevent any bending of the barrel. In the diagram a three-point suspension scheme is illustrated, the steel lines passing over single pulleys, after which they pass round another three-way pulley and are "married" together with a "bull-dog" clip; thence they go as a single cable to a winch fixed on the fly gallery rail (or in some cases on the wall). The attachment of the batten itself to the barrel is often by means of "pear-rings" (so called from their shape). These rings slide on to the barrel

and should allow the battens to be raised to the highest position that is likely to be required (this is sometimes right up to the grid) or lowered to within reach of an electrician standing on the stage for cleaning and re-lamping.

The supply of current is by means of V.I.R. cables carried in canvas hose, although in recent years the London County Council has required multi-core asbestos covered cable to be used in the Council's area. In either case the ends are secured to a special gland and grips are carried on

the ends of the batten, the electric connexions being made by a link box, as in the case of the footlights already described. The link box and cable or hose grips are made up as one unit, and a similar batten connexion box is carried on the

The flexible part of the cable run is known in the theatre as "tripe," and in order that it should not get in the way of scenery and the like, the slack is hoisted up as shown in Fig. 25 by a simple sash cord passing over a pulley and attached to a

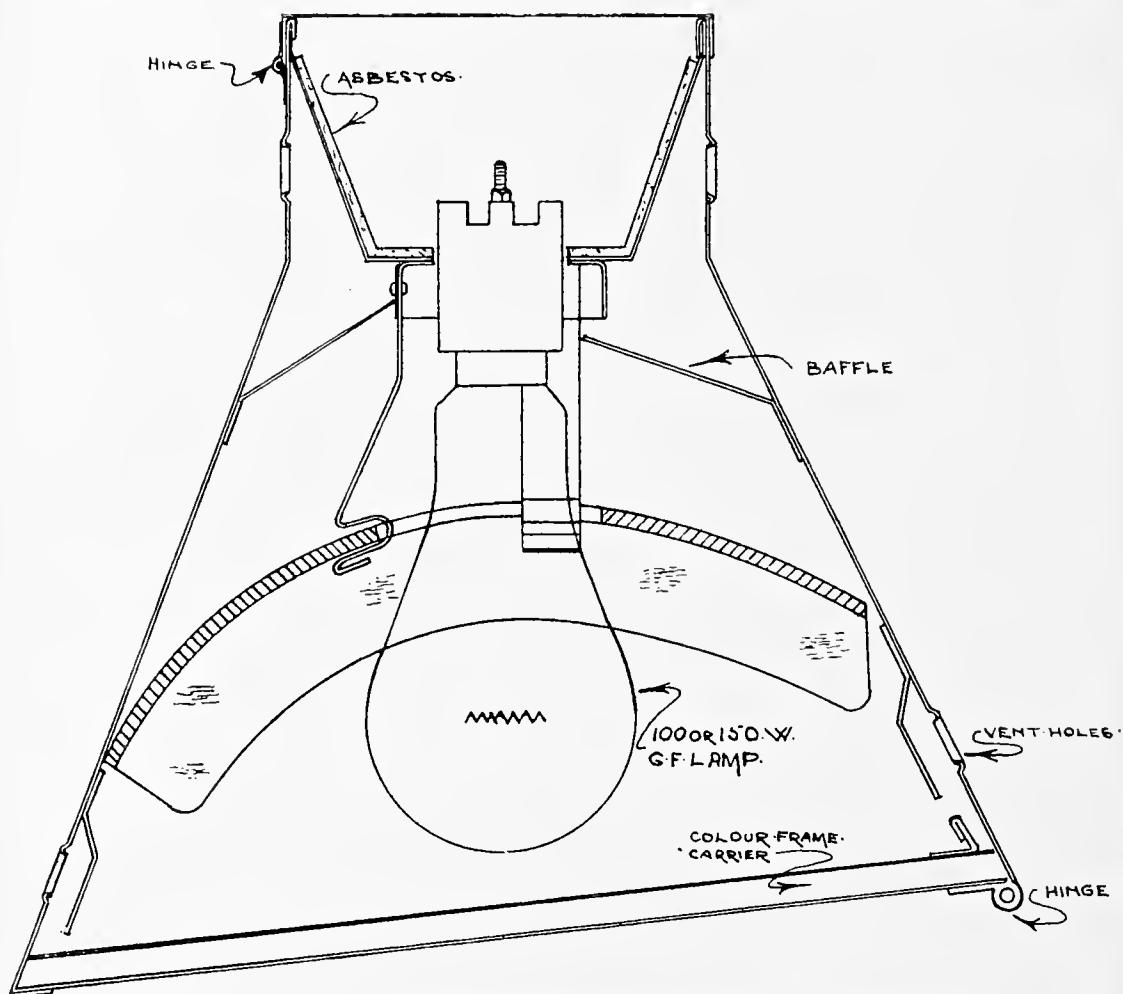


FIG. 26. VENECO MAGAZINE TYPE BATTEN WITH SILVERED GLASS REFLECTOR

fly gallery rail, or side wall of the stage. As the canvas hose or asbestos covered cable is not a conductor an "earth" wire to ensure electrical continuity should be included. The authors have occasionally, on small stages, run the wire straight through from the switchboard to the battens, using metallic flexible, in place of canvas, hose, and in this case no link box or earth wire is needed.

suitable bobbin for the "tripe" to pass round without too sharp a bend, which is likely to damage the cable by kinking.

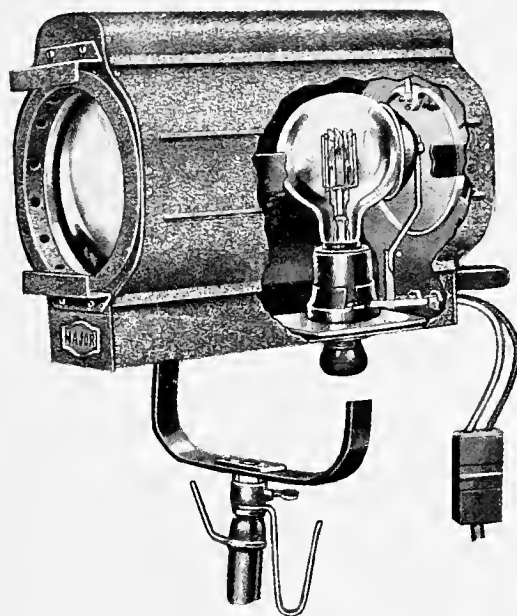
Licensing authorities insist on good ventilation of battens, and there are regulations that concern the provision of guards to prevent borders and other scenery from lying on the battens and catching fire: see Fig. 26 for a section of a typical batten.

## FOCUS LAMPS

Whereas flood lamps are used for general illumination, focus lamps are employed for localized light. The most important of this group is the so-called spot light. Strictly speaking, a spot lantern is one with a fixed beam angle, or, at any rate, with only a limited range of adjustment. The best known are the "baby" spots and special types that are made for use in the footlights. Owing to these "baby" spots being employed in cramped places as a rule, they will take only 250 watt lamps, and to keep their size to a minimum the movement of the lamp to and from the lens is only about 1 in. A common size of lens for this purpose is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in. diameter by 7 in. focus. In the larger types of "spotlights," or, more properly, focus lamps, a 6 in. or 8 in. diameter by 6 in. or 10 in. focus lens is used mounted in a well-ventilated box, as shown in Fig. 27. These lanterns can be fixed to stands or suspended in the same manner as flood lanterns. The lenses are either mounted in metal sheaths ready to slide into grooves in the front of the lantern (and wired across to prevent pieces of glass falling in the event of breakage), or, preferably, the bare lenses are placed in front of the housing and kept in place by a flange at the rear and a "press" ring in the front. This ring can easily be taken in or out with the thumb and forefinger for replacement or change of lens. In the body of the lantern is a sliding support to hold the light source, and by adjusting this the beam of light can be made to issue from the lantern in parallel rays when the slide is at the focus of the lens, or to expand almost to flooding point when it is brought closer to the lens. For good results optically, the arc is the best source of light, but arcs are not often practicable. When, however, an arc is used, the beam will be sharp and clear, and masks or shutters of various kinds can be used to modify the shape of the beam where it strikes the stage. Arcs are still used in many theatres from the "perches," that is, lighting positions at the sides of the proscenium about 8 ft. or 9 ft. above the stage floor, so called because platforms are built there for the operators to stand on. The name survives even when the platforms are not provided. Owing to their high power and efficiency, arcs are necessary in large theatres for motion picture projection or where "spotting" is required from the rear of the

auditorium. In the latter case, the necessity to have an operator on the lantern is no disadvantage, because players are often "followed" (this requires hand operation) as they move about the stage.

A large 100 ampere arc lantern for this work is depicted in Fig. 28. The arc mechanism itself has various movements whereby the arc can be



Major Equipment Co.

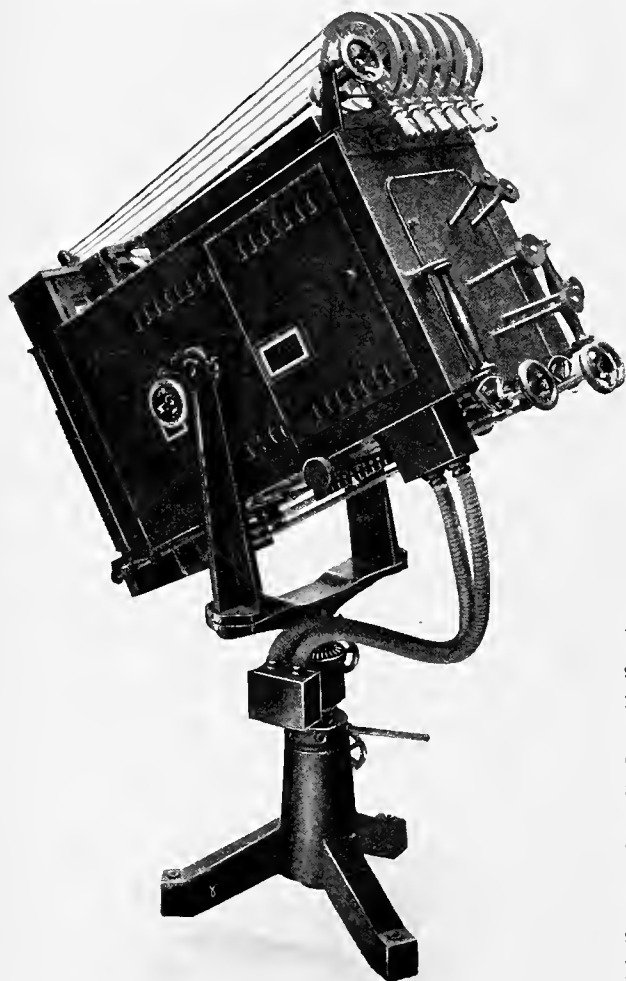
FIG. 27

raised or lowered or swung laterally for adjustment on the optical axis of the lantern, and feed controls for the carbons. Many instruments of this kind have colour magazines for quick change of mediums, as well as both long and short focus lenses arranged for quick interchange so that the heavy arc mechanism itself does not have to be moved every time spotting has to be changed to flooding and vice versa. An integral part of these lanterns should be "barn-door" shutters working both vertically and horizontally for rectangular masking or "black-out" purposes. An iris diaphragm, if provided, is an added advantage.

Arc lanterns taking over 50 amperes need, in addition to ballasting resistance, resistance for starting purposes. This starting resistance must be mounted in accordance with the regulations of the licensing authority. Switching arrangements

within reach of the arc lantern operator enable successive "steps" of the starting resistance to be cut out after the arc has been "struck," thus increasing the current until the ballasting resistance

it will not have such sharp edges as before. This is because the source is no longer a point, even approximately. It may be looked upon as a large number of points grouped together, and each point may be considered to send out light rays that are refracted by the lens separately, producing a beam that is not so perfectly "disciplined" as when a point source is used. When the centre of the lamp filament is at the focus of the lens the majority of the rays will emerge as an approximately parallel beam, but diverging beams coming from those points of the filament that are not at the focal point of the lens will also exist, and the smallest beam obtainable will have a divergence of several degrees—see Fig. 29. As the lamp is



R. R. Beard, Ltd.  
FIG. 28

alone is in use, and the arc is taking its full rating of current.

The actual source of light, shown in Fig. 27, is a gas-filled lamp with bunched filament. While working on the same general lines, this lamp gives a different effect. The difference in the colour of the light sources will be discussed later. The beam itself issuing from the lantern will have different properties. It will be difficult to mask the beam sharply by means of shutters and diaphragms, and

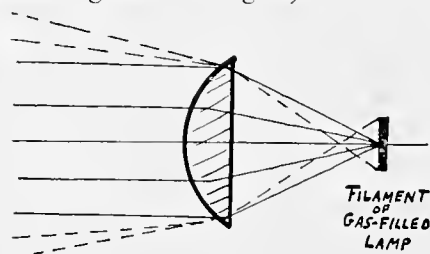


FIG. 29

brought forward towards the lens and the beam spreads out, a distinct "phantom" is seen surrounding the principal beam like a halo. It is this "phantom" beam that makes masking so difficult, especially as in the main beam itself the light rays are not all at the same angle to the optical axis of the lens. As an example of this masking difficulty, suppose a focus lantern such as we are considering is mounted on the front of the dress circle of a theatre and directs a beam on to an actor who is standing at the centre of the stage. We shall probably find that when the proper adjustment has been made for the actor, a portion of the circle of light from the lantern will strike the backcloth with unpleasant results, and probably throw shadows of scenery on to it as well. When we try to mask off the top portion of the beam by inserting a strip of metal or cardboard into the colour slide grooves of the lantern, we shall find that in order to do this effectively we have half-covered the lens of the lantern and reduced the total light by a corresponding amount, thus remedying one evil by creating another. With the arc as a source, this masking would have been easier.



## SNOW

By A. E. PETERSON

*Founder, Sunday Adventurers' Club; Secretary, Kingston Marionette Players, etc.*

ONE frequently hears of a "frost" in the theatre, but the actual presentation of a snowstorm on the stage is a more rare occurrence. The modern producer instead of allowing his audience to see a snowstorm usually arranges his snow scene immediately *after* a fall of snow. Years ago producers welcomed the opportunity of staging plays with snowstorms or some other spectacular display, and in this connexion some of the old playbills are a joy to read. In *Exile, or the Deserts of Siberia* one reads of "A Dutiful Daughter who conceived the Glorious Design of Rescuing a Father from Exile carried into Execution in Defiance of Intercepting Mountains of Snow" and which she crossed during a "Raging Blizzard." In the pantomime of *The Magic Pipe, or Harlequin and Snowball*, staged at the Adelphi Theatre about 1820-1822, we are told of the "Songs, Choruses, Etc., the Machinery and Tricks, invented and executed expressly for this Occasion. . . ." and the wonders to be seen are hinted at in the "Succession of Scenery." "Scene I. A Mountainous Country covered with Snow—Heavy Fall of Snow—The Spirits of Frost hail their Monarch—Frost descends in a Car—Grand Recitative and Chorus—Spirits Retire, Pilgrim attacked by Frost and Rescued by a Country Traveller—Who the Devil are you?—Frost sent Packing—Traveller Rewarded—Magic Pipe—Change of Affairs—Turns to Harlequin—Gift of Magic Sword—Seeks Columbine—Great Disappointment of Frost—Swears Revenge—Dreadful Thunderbolt—Fall of Snow." During the course of the pantomime, in addition to meeting "The Clown with Three Heads," one met ladies rejoicing in the names of "Nancy Nantz, Margery Clack, Dolly Dumpling, Susan Whipe, Margaret Flaps, Mrs. Twist, and Squinting Nan," whilst amongst the gentlemen were "Timothy Queer'em, Young Vasey, Chanting Ned, Shrillcove Bob, Trottershaking Tom, Tim Grab'em, John Lag'em, Tim Alum the Baker, Will Fluefaker

the Sweep, and various other Pantomimic Characters."

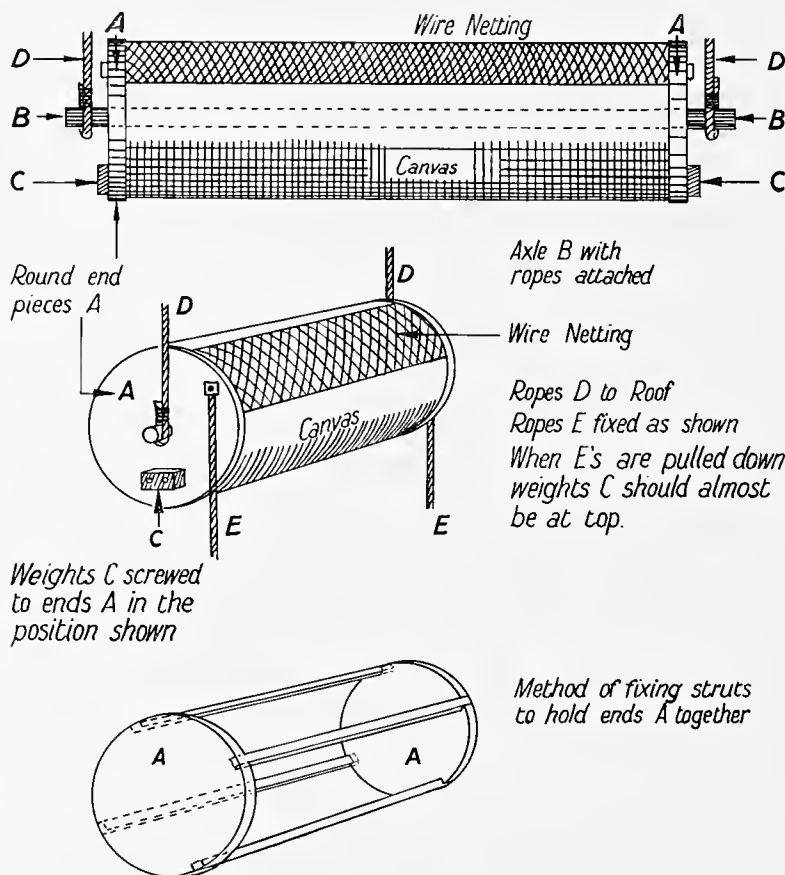
In those old plays the snow was supplied by men standing on the grid or in the flies from where they flung handfuls of paper snow with a broad sweeping gesture similar to that made by a farmer broadcasting his seeds. The machinist of one theatre was in the habit of purchasing his snow material already torn up from the local printer who supplied the playbills. On one occasion the play came to a premature close owing to the carelessness of the printer's apprentice who had inadvertently (?) dropped a large iron nut from one of the printing machines into the sack containing the torn waste paper. This was not observed at the time, and during the storm the heroine was struck on the head and stunned. The thickness of her hat saved her from what might have been a more serious accident, and the re-issue of a free pass to the gallery, which had been withdrawn from the apprentice, prevented further "accidents."

In some of the older theatres there is still to be seen the "snow box" or "snow trough." This is a long wooden box fixed above the grid and extending from one side of the stage to the other. The box is so constructed that it can easily be rocked. This causes the torn paper to fall through the long slits that are cut in the sides of the box.

In place of the snowstorm the snow scene is now used. In a production of Masfield's *The Faithful* a snow scene was represented by a six-fold Japanese screen painted to suggest winter, and in a presentation of Ibsen's play, *John Gabriel Borkman*, the scene where Borkman dies in the snow consisted of a backcloth showing snow covered hills in the distance, a stunted fir tree the branches of which were heavily laden with snow, and a snow-covered garden seat. The stage cloth was painted a greyish white. As Borkman entered he accidentally brushed against the fir tree and the audience saw the snow shaken from the branches fall to the stage, he

collapsed on a mound of snow, conveniently placed in the centre of the stage, and when he was lifted to the garden seat much play was made of clearing it of snow.

*Violets*, where in the second scene of the Epilogue "The Garden of the Stone Jug, 1932" a skating spectacle is staged. On a huge revolving stage is seen the outside of the inn with a small pond



In many stage spectacles where snow scenes were featured an added attraction was an ice carnival or ice ballet where shapely beauties attired in white fur coatees and silk tights glided about the stage on roller skates. The carnival was usually graced with the presence of a couple of expert skaters whose acrobatic ability was turned to good account. The novelty of roller skating as a stage spectacle soon wore off, and the next development in this direction was made possible by the use of a tank of water, which was kept frozen over by means of ammonia piping. This made real ice skating possible. The latest, and perhaps final, development of this type of stage effect is that used in the production of *Wild*

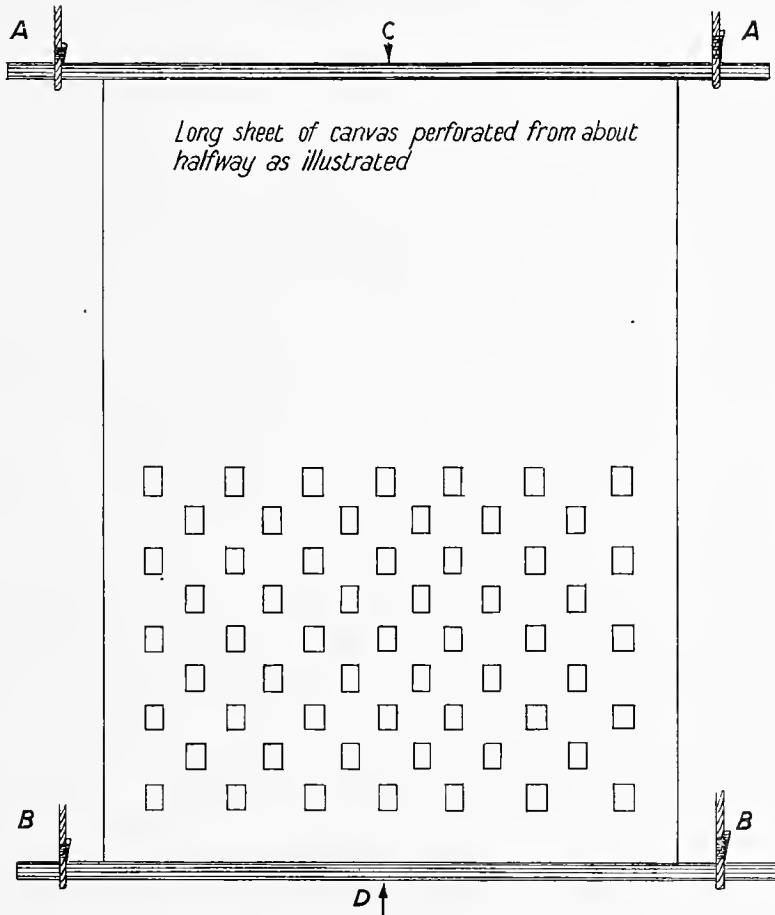
of water covered with ice, on which skate eight or nine couples. The pond is a number of flats of wood which, when laid on the stage, fit together and are held in position by a jointed beading that surrounds the whole. The "ice" material is a secret composition that sets with a hard, smooth surface that is very "fast." This composition is spread over the wood foundation to a depth of half an inch, and the surface is made new again after each performance by a top dressing of the material. Ordinary ice skates are used. As the play closes the stage revolves and the interior of the Stone Jug Inn with a reunion in middle age of the characters whose love stories have been told is seen at the same time as the

exterior where happy youth glides over the ice to the accompaniment of light-hearted, joyous laughter.

When it is necessary to stage a snowstorm, a

becomes choked, a gentle shaking of the box will clear it.

A variation of this device is shown in the accompanying illustration. The round end-pieces



*Ropes A to Roof and fixed.*

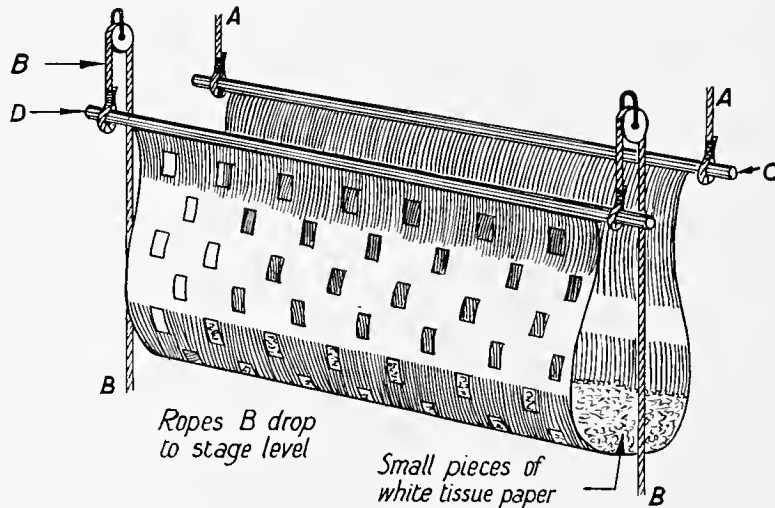
*Ropes B to pulleys fixed slightly higher than rod C and returned to stage level.*

long wooden box similar to that already described for suggesting falling rain by means of rice may be used, but in place of the perforated bottom through which the rice falls, the bottom is made of wire netting such as is used for enclosing poultry runs and which fits close to the shutter. The box is filled with white tissue paper torn into small shreds, and when the shutter is dropped the snow should fall. If the wire netting

of the apparatus are made of stout plywood and are loosely slotted on a long round batten. The circular ends are joined together by four long lengths of wood, which keep the cylinder rigid when it is rotated. The ends of a long narrow length of wire netting are fastened to each end of the cylinder, and the remaining portion of the cylinder is enclosed with a long strip of canvas. One edge of the canvas is secured to the edge of

the wire netting, and the other edge is laced in such a manner that it can be opened to allow the snow material to be inserted. The rope *D* may be threaded through a hole bored in the batten *B* or it may be fastened in such a manner that there is no risk of the centre batten *B* slipping when the apparatus is rotated. When snow is required, a pull on the cord *E* will swing the cylinder, and a rocking motion is easily

tains the torn paper. A constant fall of snow is ensured by working batten *D* up and down, care being taken to make sure that the lower end of the bag is always out of sight from the front. Both these snow machines should be fixed as high as possible to allow the snow to separate and begin to fall steadily before becoming visible to the audience. There should, of course, be a stage-cloth to catch the fallen snow.



maintained by pulling and releasing the cord *E*, which is assisted by the counterweights at *C*.

A more simple form of apparatus consists of two long battens, between which is slung a long piece of canvas or scrim. The batten *C* is fixed and the batten *D* is suspended from the flies or roof in such a manner that it can be pulled up and lowered by the lines *B*. If the cradle has to extend across the entire width of the stage the batten *D* may be supported by the usual three lines, which are led to a single cleat. The canvas bag that holds the prepared snow is perforated with long holes about two inches apart. These begin about half way along the length of the canvas, and when the batten *D* is at its highest point the sagging portion of the canvas bag re-

The effect of scurrying and whirling snow may be obtained by having electric fans placed in the wings or some other place and blowing the snow upstage to prevent it escaping into the auditorium. The fans should be noiseless in running.

When a character enters after being in a snow-storm that is raging outside, it is customary for him to shake the snow from his hat and coat. This snow is coarse salt. A plentiful supply should be placed in the brim of his hat and along the shoulders. The actor should not enter wearing brightly polished shoes; they should be made up by means of wet fuller's earth or wet salt. Drifted snow on a window is suggested by fixing long strips of cotton wool to the outside of the window along the bottom and half way up one side.

## SINGING AND DANCING

By DUMAYNE WARNE

*Author (with Phil Forsyth) of "The House," "The Ultimate Revue," "Second Thoughts," etc.*

THIS article is not a singing or dancing lesson, but a discussion on what is required of the singers and dancers in a musical performance, with a few notes on the difficulties when the available talent is unequal to supplying the needs of the production in hand.

That the singers, principals and chorus, should learn their music properly and get it right into their voices by the time the stage rehearsals begin, goes without saying. But since an amateur society cannot (or should not) merely send for a professional to take a vacant place in their cast which cannot be easily filled by an ordinary member of the company, they are sometimes obliged to entrust a role to a member who is not entirely suitable. He may be competent from the point of view of acting or dancing, but his singing may not be of the required standard. Owing to shortage of available material, however, it may be necessary to risk the singing and hope to secure the success of the performance by virtue of his ability as an actor or a dancer.

In certain kinds of production this may not be difficult, while in the others it is quite impossible. In opera, for instance, the singing is all-important. There can be no such thing as faking the singing here. If there is an important part that cannot be competently played by a member of the company, a singer must be borrowed from outside, or the play changed. It is equally important in light opera, but the music of light opera is usually not so difficult as that of grand opera, and, although it needs to be as well sung, it is not as a rule so hard to find singers with the necessary qualifications to undertake the parts.

With romantic musical plays and ordinary musical comedies, a rather different level is reached. In grand opera there are no parts that can be played by anyone who has not been trained as a singer, whereas in the romances and comedies there are many songs that require to be talked rather than sung, especially by the come-

dians, although the leading parts require singing talent of a high order.

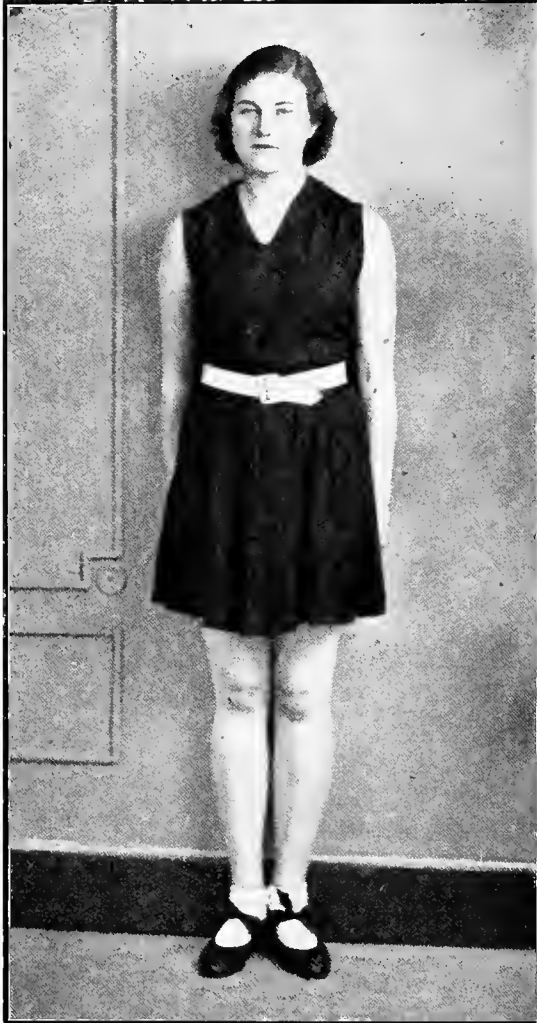
It is not a disadvantage to have good singers in modern musical comedies, but it is definitely not so important that the singing should be outstanding as that the comedians should be funny and that the dancers able to dance well.

In short, the importance of the singing declines as one passes from grand opera, in which it is everything, to modern musical comedy, in which it is only about a third of the production, the other two-thirds being the dancing and the comedy.

It should be emphasized, by the way, that everything stated in these notes is relative. A society does not wish to fall below its own standards. Rather should it try to improve; but what is good enough for the leading part in one society will be only of chorus standard in another. Every company likes to feel that it is quite the best that has ever been formed and certainly as near the professional level as can be imagined, but the fact must be faced that, in the majority of cases, this feeling is by no means justified. Some are much nearer professional standards than others, but the worst are very bad indeed. It is only by taking the greatest pains to avoid anything slipshod in the way of casting of even the smallest parts that progress can be made.

Cases will arise, however, from time to time, perhaps as a result of sickness in close proximity to the date of the show, when even the strongest society may be obliged to fill up a part with an actor who would normally not be considered equal to it. Of course, in grand opera, there is little to be done. An opera is singing, and without singing there is no opera. This is perhaps the only case that justifies the paying of a professional to undertake the part, after careful search has been made (with the aid of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association) to see if there is not an amateur somewhere in the country who will step forward to fill the breach.

In certain other shows, however, something can be done to help in cases where the talents of the singers are not quite equal to what is required



of them. For example, there is the device known as "talking" a song. Although this is far more difficult than it sounds, it is not impossible for any intelligent actor to do it adequately, and it is of especial value in comedian parts. But it cannot be done in genuine opera or in the real singing parts of any other production. If these cannot be sung properly the work should not be attempted.

Weakness in the chorus can be overcome by having other singers concealed in the wings to join in with them and thereby increase the volume. When this method is adopted, it is imperative that those on the stage should open their mouths wide and generally give the impression that they are working hard or the effect will be ridiculous. In modern musical comedies the standard of singing required by the chorus is, as a rule, not high. In fact, often a little enthusiastic shouting will serve the purpose. The musical director will, when teaching the singing originally, have stressed the importance of a good attack and lively delivery. Nowhere is it more important than in a chorus whose singing is not good.

#### DANCING

The ordinary playgoer (to musical plays) likes to hear good singing in the theatre. Perhaps he knows a little of its technique, and although he will tolerate an efficient fake, if it helps the show, he knows it to be a fake. With regard to dancing, the situation is quite different. The ordinary playgoer knows nothing whatever about the technicalities of dancing, and, except for a curious enthusiasm that the company should be light on their feet, he does not know in the least how well or how badly they are dancing, provided that the result is effective.

Failure to appreciate this point results in a large number of amateur performances being less attractive than they otherwise might be. The performers waste their time learning a number of complicated dance steps, which the audience do not understand, do them badly, and the performance fails, because the audience do not realize how near they were to something out of the ordinary. They merely see that something has gone wrong.

From the dancing point of view, things that are difficult to do are not necessarily effective on the stage, while some of the simplest movements are absolutely astonishing in their effect. When the dances are arranged by the producer, this is not likely to go seriously wrong. He is concerned that the whole production should be as good as possible, so he will arrange movements which are within the powers of the company, but which, at the same time, have the desired result on the audience.

When the dances are not arranged by the producer, but by a local dancing teacher, difficulties begin to arise. A dancing teacher, unless she happens to be experienced at this particular kind of work, tends rather to teach dance steps than stage movements, but many of the most effective stage movements are not dancing or dance steps at all; they are merely cleverly arranged walking about movements, in which a dancer, as such, has no interest.

The first essential for any stage dance arrangement, either for a principal or for the chorus, is that it should have movement. The most complicated dance step in the world, however beautifully executed, is of no value on the stage if it is too small to be seen. And this is where most ordinary teachers of dancing fail at stage arrangements. The business that they set for the chorus too often consists of a number of small dance steps which, although interesting in themselves, have, from the point of view of the audience, no value whatever.

From this it would appear that when a producer is in difficulties with regard to a suitable dance arrangement, he should make the company move about the stage as much as possible. Within the limits of common sense, this is so, and provided that the balance is observed between movement and restlessness, most plays can succeed on an incredibly small amount of actual dancing.

Should the company have any talent at all for dancing, the producer's task in arranging suitable dance numbers is much easier. But, unfortunately, dancing is a thing that few people, except those who specialize in it, trouble to do to any great extent. Even if they have been taught, they never practise, so that when they begin work on a production, the one or two who have had any experience are so completely out of training that they are no better than any of the others.

Almost everybody who sings does get a certain amount of practice, even if it is only by accident, as it were. They sing at parties, concerts, other shows, or at home for the love of it. But, except the specialists, nobody ever thinks of practising a few dance movements. For this reason every society is recommended to organize a weekly dance class. Usually it can be arranged on the most economical terms, over a long period, with a local dancing teacher. And it is no disadvantage

that the company should know dancers' steps, provided that they are taught to use them in the proper manner on the stage.



Apart from the advantage of having a number of trained dancers always available, it is desirable that members of a company should be brought together as much as possible as this is one of the best ways of promoting the club spirit. Another point is that while the members are in the habit of going to a dancing class they will learn things which, although perhaps not of immediate value, may become more important on a change in the

character of the productions usually presented by the society. For instance, the fascination of step or tap dancing may be explored. Tap-dancing, although not as essential in some of the older musical comedies as it is in the newer ones, may often be used with effect. There is no reason why a society should not start its own singing class too, if it is considered desirable, but a class for singing is not so necessary as one for dancing, for singers can practise by themselves, whereas troupe dancers cannot, even if they would.

On the subject of dancing, a word might be said as to the desirability of the chorus dancers wearing some kind of uniform at rehearsal. There is no need to have anything elaborate or in the least expensive, but from the point of view of helping the producer it is of great value that the chorus should be similarly attired. It is much easier to gauge the effect of a number when it is rehearsed by a company in uniform rather than in a variety of costumes.

For the men, grey flannel trousers and a sports shirt are all that are required. Girls will contrive to vary the simplest costume in such a way as to make it look different if they are allowed

to do so. Difficulties may arise as to what some of the girls will wear and what they will not. Some refuse to appear unless they are enveloped in a gown that reaches almost to the floor; others are prepared to face with equanimity the idea of wearing a bathing costume. They might be allowed to vote for which of a few selected models they will wear, and having made up their minds, they should be forced to appear at rehearsal in the costume. There are one or two features about a rehearsal dress that are definitely desirable. The dresses should all be of the same colour, which should be one that will not vary much in shade. Black has a good deal to recommend it, as it does not fade, and it does not show marks. They should also not be so enveloping as to enable the wearer to seem to carry out a movement without in fact doing it at all. If skirts are worn, they should all be the same length above the knee. Two eminently practical rehearsal costumes are illustrated.

Finally, care should be taken that dancers are not allowed to stand about and to catch cold in thin dancing dresses after working strenuously at rehearsal.



## THE LIGHT COMEDY LEADS

By D. GRAHAM DAVIS

Editor of "The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal"

IN the separate consideration of the groups, the "light comedy leads" should be taken first, not only because they comprise the most important of Gilbert's creations, but because they are the parts that are most frequently seen, on the amateur stage, without due regard for, or knowledge of, the right manner of interpretation. Where many amateurs make a grave mistake is in regarding these parts as comic characters. They are not, and never have been, comic in the sense of calling for a George Robey, a W. H. Berry, or a Leslie Henson—the type represented by the "funny man" of musical comedy. The humour is to be found inwardly rather than outwardly; that is, in the words and situations, and not mainly in the actions of the player. Gilbert gives us, in these characters, a set of people, all of whom display the idiosyncrasies of the Englishman. Whether these characters be garbed as Spanish grandees, in Japanese dress, or as high legal luminaries, they are all folk such as you or I might meet in the street. When we laugh, we are not laughing at the absurdities of the actor who is playing the part. The wit and humour of the lines and situations (as interpreted by the actor) draw our laughter.

This does not mean that the parts should be played exactly as though they were found in a straight, modern comedy. We must make all allowances for the absurdities and unrealities of the comic opera world. To show a British general, in full uniform, coming to a picnic on a rocky Cornish shore would be ludicrous were it not leavened with a touch of whimsicality—a merry twinkle in the eye. The actor knows full well that his part is amusing; that on it much of the comedy depends—but to be a true Gilbert and Sullivan comedian, he must hide this from the audience. The realization of the humour must be kept to himself.

One might give a good example of this from experience. A few years ago a member of one of the D'Oyly Carte companies played Bunthorne,

in *Patience*, in a manner which, although strictly traditional, was unlike the usual reading. This actor, although a born comedian, preferred to play Bunthorne as a somewhat introspective study of the sham aesthete. Yet, despite his almost straight reading of the part, not one jot of humour was lost; not a single humorous point was missed. About the same time I saw an amateur Bunthorne, who, through ignorance of what was required of the part (an ignorance shared, apparently, by the producer), stopped only just short of playing it as a red-nosed comedian would act it. Was it to be wondered at if the audience at the amateur production called *Patience* a silly work, and failed to understand it owing to the way in which the reading of the principal role was mutilated, while the professional's traditional, if unorthodox, rendering received the praise of discriminating critics and his audiences, which were no more intelligent or intellectual than those that watched the clowning and vapouring of the amateur.

Here one might interpolate the well-known story of Gilbert's reply to the comedian who wished to introduce a piece of business because, he said, it would get a laugh. "So it would if you were to sit down on a pork pie," was Gilbert's sole comment. That represents Gilbert's attitude towards extraneous aids to laughter. The humour was in the words he had placed in the character's mouth, the situations in which the character found himself, and such moderate and restrained business as Gilbert had decided would be necessary. Certainly, as with additions to the libretto, he sanctioned additional business—much of which arose as the result of accidents (Ko-Ko's business with his big toe is one of such cases)—but he would never allow his humour to be helped out by supposedly funny antics, such as would be more fitted to the music-hall stage than to that of the Savoy.

Frequently these characters speak the most outrageously mirth-provoking lines. But the lines are spoken seriously. Take the scene in *Iolanthe*

between the Lord Chancellor and Strephon. His Lordship is greatly incensed at Strephon's flouting of his decree. Almost exploding with wrath, he rounds on the youth. "Now, sir," he eventually utters, "what excuse have you to offer for having disobeyed an order of the Court of Chancery?" Strephon explains that he knows no Courts of Chancery; he is governed by "Nature's Acts of Parliament." He asks the Lord Chancellor if he is "Chancellor of birds and trees, King of the

the lines over. The Lord Chancellor is in deadly earnest; he shows no realization that he is talking nonsense, and the audience must be left unaware of the fact that he, the actor, is probably chuckling inwardly at these lines, which he has repeated many times at rehearsals. The only glimpse of this that is allowed is that little touch of twinkling eye, or whimsicality, which every good Gilbert and Sullivan light comedy player must bring to his parts.

No one would claim that an actor devoid of a sense of humour would be ideally suited to these parts. Yet such a player would be vastly superior to, and probably more successful than, one who tried to show the audience what a funny fellow he is.

Summed up, the ideal "light comedy lead" is a man who possesses a marked aptitude for character acting, a well-developed sense of humour (which he can keep to himself), and a whimsical and pleasing personality. His diction (as with any other Gilbert and Sullivan player) must be faultless, to enable him to get the full value out of the many patter-songs. He should be nimble footed and graceful in his actions, and, above all, he should be utterly devoid of any of the vocal tricks and accents so dear to the musical comedy "funny man." I am afraid that his ability as a singer does not greatly matter. Naturally, he must have a singing voice, but even Sullivan never expected great singing from the light comedy parts. This is evidenced by his treatment of these parts in concerted numbers; sometimes they will be instructed to sing with the tenors, sometimes with the basses. Also, as many of these parts are mature, even elderly men, a pure, beautifully modulated voice would be out of keeping. Physically, the ideal light comedy man is one of medium height and build.

Having thus considered these parts collectively, now take them as individuals, for no two of them are exactly alike. Once more, and all through the reviews of the parts, we will take the operas in chronological order.

JOHN WELLINGTON WELLS (*The Sorcerer*) dates from before the true development of this group. With Ko-Ko, he shares the distinction of being one of the two parts in which a certain amount of restrained low comedy is permitted. He should be played on the lines of an impish creature of fantasy. Combining satanic dealings



THE AUTHOR AS  
SIR JOSEPH PORTER, K.C.B.

It should be noticed that any indications of this being a "comic character" are avoided in the make-up for this part

winds, and Prince of the thunderclouds." The Chancellor ponders. "No," he replies as though he had never thought of this. He goes on to explain that there is no evidence that Nature has interested herself on Strephon's behalf. "No evidence," exclaims the astonished shepherd, "I tell you she bade me take my love." "Ah," admonishes the Chancellor, "you mustn't tell us what she told you—it's not evidence." He goes on to explain that "an affidavit from a thunderstorm or a few words on oath from a heavy shower would meet with all the attention they deserve."

What is this but arrant nonsense? The scene is always accompanied by a crescendo of laughter. This is in no way helped by any antics on the part of the actor—any comic business to help to get

with the gentlest disposition, one would not expect him to behave as an ordinary mortal—still less as a mere buffoon. In his frock-coat, top hat, and ginger whiskers, he is a picture of genteel respectability, and his voice should be in accordance with this trait—not that of a vulgar little bounder. Obviously “trade,” he might well feel out of place among the “county” folk he meets. But he is always sure of himself, with a pleasant self-confidence that never gives way to bumptiousness; that, he feels, would never uphold the dignity of a family magician.

In the incantation scene in the first act the actor may let himself go; the more amusingly supernatural—even grotesque—he makes his actions, the better. But he must control such antics to his own share of the proceedings. Never must he divert attention to himself while Aline and Alexis are singing their duets in this scene. His moments of depression can be made amusing if, even then, the actor does not drop the air of mischievous whimsicality with which the character is endowed.

THE RT. HON. SIR JOSEPH PORTER, K.C.B. (*H.M.S. Pinafore*), the extremely civilian First Lord of the Admiralty, is one of those pompous, self-opinionated egoists whom Gilbert could draw so well. Of humble origin (as he explains in his famous “autobiographical” song), he has none the less adopted the overbearing condescension of the snob who would pose as a patrician. This little figure of officialdom struts his way through the opera in a ridiculous manner, of which he remains supremely unconscious. He takes himself, and his “official utterances,” seriously; there is nothing amusing to him in the pompous speeches and actions that draw such bursts of laughter from the audience. In this part, even more than in many, is there that need for inward, rather than apparent, humour.

The only time, in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, when the pose of dignified condescension may be dropped is in the second act trio with Josephine and the Captain. Here, it will be obvious, a certain amount of unbending, amounting almost to abandon, is essential. Apart from this, the air of pomposity must never be lost. Once that happens, the whole effect of the part is lost. Even this one lapse into abandon must be kept clear of buffoonery. The character should speak with a tired

drawl, as though it were too great an effort to speak to mere humans. The sailors vociferously echo Ralph’s remark that “a better captain don’t walk the deck.” “Good,” replies Sir Joseph, languidly and without enthusiasm. His movements and gestures should follow this lead. Anything in the nature of jerkiness (as is sometimes seen among amateurs) should be avoided.

MAJOR-GENERAL STANLEY (*The Pirates of Penzance*) resembles Sir Joseph in many ways, but



“AND I, MY LORDS, EMBODY  
THE LAW”

Although a comedy part, the dignity of the Lord Chancellor has to be represented in the appearance of the actor

on a more human plane, with none of the First Lord’s aloofness and self-importance. One does not want too photographic a representation of the middle-aged military commander, for the general himself admits that he is a little more than the “chocolate soldier,” later borrowed from Bernard Shaw by musical comedy. He is a likeable old man, but inclined to be peppery. This side of the character is only occasionally in evidence, but the actor should suggest that it is there, just below the surface, ready to burst out into testy petulance at a moment’s notice. This part is especially well suited to a dapper actor with a good bearing and, of course, a whimsical manner, but offers little difficulty in any other way.

REGINALD BUNTHORNE (*Patience*) is a much younger character than his predecessors, but is

equally effective in the hands of an older man. He is a humbug of the first water, and must be shown as such, clearly and convincingly, yet free from conscious exaggeration in the acting. This last remark must be qualified by adding that the pose adopted by the poet is itself extreme; but this lies in the part itself rather than in the way in which it is played. When on rare occasions he unbends, it is Bunthorne who is doing so, not the actor who is trying for more laughs. In fact, it is a part that would be convincing and amusing however "straightly" it may be played. The two poems, nonsense though they be, must be declaimed in dead seriousness. The more the actor is in earnest during the recitals, the more richly humorous is the effect. It is essential that any temptation to "guy" the poems, or any other aspect of the part, be firmly resisted. No effort should be spared to make the part convincing. Although we still have our Bunthornes, the particular brand as presented by Gilbert, and the period, will be unfamiliar to the majority of the audience, and therefore one now wants more reality in the part than may have been necessary when the opera first appeared. His voice, of course, is that of the "highbrow" as represented on the stage.

THE LORD CHANCELIOR (*Iolanthe*) is a quaintly dignified figure. His is not the dignity of the upstart Sir Joseph Porter, but the innate

dignity of one who has risen to the heights of legal eminence. As befits one who has gone to fairyland for his wife, the whimsical side of the character is marked, and should be brought out in many places where the more starchy dignity would be out of place, as, for example, during his caperings with the two Earls towards the end of the second act. Now and again, during these relaxations, he must give a sign of realization that such conduct is not quite suited to the occupant of the Woolsack.

In the scene where Iolanthe reveals herself, all idea of comedy must be suppressed. The Chancellor is now a figure in one of the most poignant scenes in comic opera. Both actor and actress have here a fine chance for pathos—which must be real pathos, not bathos. It is only when the Chancellor steps forward to suggest an amendment to the fairy law that the comedy again returns. When Iolanthe is recognized, it is usual, and indeed desirable, that the words "Iolanthe, thou livest?" should be spoken, not sung, in a half-broken, awed, and wondering voice.

Consideration of the rest of the characters in this group must wait. In general, the descriptions already given, and particularly the first two pages of this study, will convey what must be aimed at in attempting successful and convincing portrayals of the later characters.

# FOKINE AND MODERN BALLET

By ARNOLD L. HASKELL

*Joint Founder of the Camargo Society, Director of the Ballet Club, etc.*

I CANNOT do better here than to give Fokine's own "five points" on his ideas for ballet production. Everyone connected with dancing should learn them by heart. They constitute the most important utterance on ballet that has ever been written. It is also a fine tribute to Fokine as the true creator of the modern art of ballet. The points were made in a letter to *The Times*, dated 6th July, 1914, before dilettantism had attracted attention, and when Fokine had already been putting them into practice for nearly ten years. This is the practical advice of a practical man.

"The misconceptions are these. That some mistake this new school of art (The New Russian Ballet), which has arisen only during the last seven years, for the traditional ballet which continues to exist in the Imperial Theatres of St. Petersburg and Moscow, and others mistake it for the development of the principles of Isadora Duncan; while as a matter of fact the new Russian ballet is sharply differentiated by its principles both from the older ballet and from the art of that great dancer.

"The older ballet developed the form of so-called "classical dancing," consciously preferring to every other form the artificial form of dancing, on the point of the toe with the feet turned out, in short bodices, with the figure tightly laced in stays and with a strictly established system of steps, gestures, and attitudes. Miss Duncan established an entirely opposite form of her own.

"Every form of dancing is good in so far as it expresses the content or subject with which the dance deals, and that form is the most natural which is most suited to the purpose of the dancer. No one form of dancing should be accepted once and for all. Borrowing its subject from the most various historical periods, the ballet must create forms corresponding to the various periods represented. I am not speaking of ethnographical or archaeological exactitude, but of the corresponding of the style of the dancing and gestures with the style of the period represented. In the course of the ages man has repeatedly changed his plastic language and expressed his

joys and sorrows and all his emotions under a great variety of forms, often of extreme beauty. For man is infinitely various and the manifold expressiveness of his gestures cannot be reduced to a single formula.

## "THE OLD BALLET"

"The art of the old ballet turned its back on life and on all the other arts and shut itself up in a narrow circle of tradition. According to the old method of producing a ballet, the ballet master composed his dances by combining certain well-established movements and poses, and for his mimetic scenes he used a conventional system of gesticulation and endeavoured by gestures of the dancers' hands according to established rules to convey the plot of the ballet to the spectators.

"In the new ballet, on the other hand, the dramatic action is expressed by dances and mimetics in which the whole body plays a part. In order to create a stylistic picture the ballet master of the new school has to study in the first place the national dances of the nation represented, dances differing immensely from nation to nation, and often expressing the spirit of a whole race; and in the second place, the art and literature of the period in which the scene is laid. The new ballet, while recognizing the excellence both of the older ballet and of the dancing of Isadora Duncan in every case where they are suitable to the subject to be treated, refuses to accept any one form as final and exclusive.

"Not to form combinations of ready made and established dance steps but to create in each case a new form corresponding to the subject, the most expressive form possible for the representation of the period and the character of the nation represented—that is the first rule of the new ballet.

## "GESTURES FOR EXPRESSION"

"The second rule is that dancing and mimetic gesture have no meaning in a ballet unless they serve as an expression of dramatic action, and they must not be used as a mere *divertissement*\* or

\* Concert dance.

entertainment having no connexion with the scheme of the whole ballet.

"The third rule is that the new ballet admits the use of conventional gesture only where it is required by the style of the ballet, and in all other cases endeavours to replace gestures of the hands by mimetics of the whole body. Man can be, and should be, expressive from head to foot.



MICHAEL FOKINE

"The fourth rule is the expressiveness of groups and of *ensemble* dancing. In the older ballet the dancers were arranged in groups only for the purpose of ornament, and the ballet master was not concerned with the expression of any sentiment in groups of characters or in *ensemble* dancing. The new ballet on the other hand, in developing the principles of expressiveness, advances from the expressiveness of the face to the expressiveness of the whole body, and from the expressiveness of the individual body to the expressiveness of a group of bodies and the expressiveness of the combined dancing of a crowd.

"The fifth rule is the alliance of dancing with the other arts. The new ballet refusing to be the slave either of music or of scenic decoration, and recognizing the alliance of the arts only on the condition of complete equality, allows perfect freedom both to the scenic artist and to the musician. In contradistinction to the old ballet it does not demand "ballet music" from the composer as an accompaniment to dancing; it accepts music of every kind, provided only that it is good and expressive. It does not demand of the scenic artist that he should array the ballerinas in short skirts and pink slippers. It does not impose any specific "ballet" conditions on the composer or the decorative artist but gives complete liberty to their creative powers.

"No artist can tell to what extent his work is the result of the influence of others and to what extent it is his own. I cannot therefore judge to what extent the influence of the old traditions is preserved in the new ballet and how much the new ideals of Miss Duncan are reflected in it."

Finally, I am able to clear up the point touched upon above after many conversations and much correspondence, Michael Fokine's attitude towards Isadora Duncan, and what is more important still to the history of the modern dance, the true extent of her influence on him, for though he might be inclined to belittle this, his replies are so obviously reasonable and true that there can be little doubt that he is entirely correct. They naturally repeat some of the "five points," but repetition is important and it is full time that Fokine was given the credit due to him in full. In any case it is only outside dancing circles that the myth of Duncan's immense influence on the early Russian Ballet has survived. The question came to a head with a letter from Diaghileff published in Propert's *Russian Ballet*, 1921-1929. The passage says—

"I knew Isadora well at St. Petersburg and was present with Fokine at her first debuts. Fokine was mad about her dancing and the influences of Duncan on him lay at the base of all his creative work." Coming from Diaghileff such a statement should be final, but it is made in so sweeping a manner, and is so contradictory to what one has heard from others of Fokine's contemporaries, and more important still from what can be deduced from a comparison of his works

and Duncan's that it can be dismissed. It may well have been prompted by some purely personal reason. Fokine himself replies to this in a letter to me—

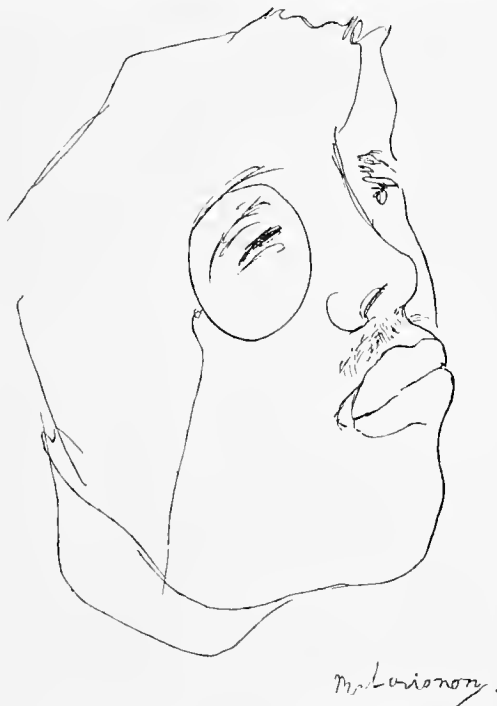
"Diaghileff could not have made such a statement sincerely. He knew better than anyone the great difference between the New Russian Ballet created by me and my various reforms and the natural dance to which Duncan tended. He saw my rehearsals and watched me compose. He knew perfectly well that 90 per cent of my compositions are totally contrary to Duncan's ideas.

"When I talk about Diaghileff I want you to understand that I am a great admirer of his and I realize and know from my own experience what he has done, better than anyone else. He was a genius as a propagandist for art and as an organizer of artists; he was something more besides, but he was no more a creator of ballet in the sense of a choreographer than he was a painter or musician. Those that give him any other position are of no value. They deny his real and immense achievements for which all who love art and beauty should be grateful. Many books have recently given an entirely false impression. I hope that you will not carry on these legends but give true history.

"To return to Isadora Duncan. Let us contrast our viewpoints. She stood for the freedom of the body from clothes; I believe in the obedience of the costume to the movements of the body and its proper adaptation to style period. She had one plastic conception for all periods and nationalities, while I am essentially interested in the difference of the movements of each individual person. She, for instance, had the same form of dance for Wagner, Gluck, Chopin, the Spanish dances of Moszkovski, and the waltzes of Strauss. The national character is absent; only ancient Greece existed for her, as if it were adaptable in its form to all periods. For me art is very closely united with the time, place, and nationality of its creation, and without this approach art loses a great deal.

"I have always been a great admirer of Duncan. The reaction against the unnaturalness of the ballet, the freedom of the body from tight clothes, the inspired simplified dance all came from Duncan. But why should we be limited to naturalness? Is not our art the development of

nature to its highest forms? It is impossible for a dancer not to know how to walk and run naturally, but it is equally impossible to be limited only to walking and running. One must explore further into the developments of body movement of a child. The child is beautiful. But what relation has that to art? If we were all to be like children, would that be enough? Movement is complicated and has wisdom. It was created by the centuries, by human history."



DIAGHILEFF, FROM A DRAWING BY LARIONOV  
(Arnold L. Haskell: Collection)

Almost on the first occasion we met, Fokine outlined to me the artistic credo that led to the ballet as we know it at the present day. I will add, the ballet at its best, for it was while disavowing some of the later Diaghileff productions that were on just then in Paris that the conversation came about. It touched closely on the question of Duncan's influence—

"Early in my career the unnaturalness, the lack of justification, the psychological untruths of the ballet so disillusioned me that I began to study for another career, that of a painter. It was only when I was appointed a teacher in the theatrical

school that I began to realize with my pupils the direction of my new tendencies—towards a 'ballet realism,' towards the notion that on the very foundation of the dance should be placed sincere emotional movement, that no matter how obscure, fantastic, and unrealistic the form of the dance may

Oriental Ballets, my romantic works such as *Le Spectre de la Rose*, *Carnaval*, and *Les Sylphides*, still given every season, have nothing in common with her. The resemblances are in the ballets *Daphnis and Chloe*, *Narcissus and Echo*, the bacchanals from *Cleopatra*\* and *Tannhauser*.



TAMARA TOUMANOVA IN FOKINE'S "LES SYLPHIDES"

seem, it must have its roots in the truth of life. Duncan too realized this, though I had already carried out some of my reforms before I saw her. I remember well going to see her with Diaghileff. I had already been engaged by him then. I became most enthusiastic because I realized that here were the very elements that I preached. I found all the expressiveness, simplicity, and naturalness that I hoped for in my own colleagues. With that initial conception there is some similarity in our aims, but there is still greater dissimilarity and our actual methods could not be more different. My Russian, Egyptian, and

We studied the same vases in the same museums; but even here her dance is free, my dance is stylized and my movements are highly complex. The similarity lies in plastic and the design of poses. I am very happy that in the treatment of ancient Greek themes—her chosen terrain—I have something in common with her, just as I am delighted to differ in other periods and moods.

"The most competent witnesses of my work are not those who knew only the Diaghileff ballet but members of the Imperial Theatres."

\* Known to us as Pavlova's famous Bacchanal.



# HOW TO PRODUCE A PLAY WITHOUT A THEATRE

By CONSUELO M. DE REYES

*Producer, Little Theatre, Citizen House, Bath, and Everyman Theatre, Hampstead ; Lecturer in Drama,  
University College, Exeter*

PLAY production is by no means dependent upon an actual "theatre" in the modern sense. In fact, the theatre as we know it is a late development, and was universally used only after 1650. Much of the greatest drama that has ever been written was created for production without a theatre, so if you do not possess a theatre or even the chance of adapting a room for a theatre, there is no reason why you should be deterred from the production of plays. Producing without a theatre is a fascinating process, in which there is room for all possible inventiveness. Where a platform is available, even though there is no proscenium arch and no curtain, the problem still resembles that of performing in the usual theatre. Owing to the fact that the platform cannot be hidden from the audience, it is necessary to find some method other than the usual methods for changing the scenery and for revealing and hiding the characters.

Frequently it is possible to choose a play that can be performed without a change of scene of any description. The scene can be erected on the platform before the audience enters, and no attempt need be made to hide the scene at any time. This was the method used by Rheinhardt in the production of *The Miracle*, as produced at the Century Theatre, New York, and also in Mr. C. B. Cochran's London production of this play. In *The Miracle* the entire auditorium was transformed into a vast cathedral. As one entered, one saw the pillars, arches, and grill. From time to time monks crossed in front of the altar and genuflected. An old verger tottered out and lit the candles. The organ music started, the characters began to enter, and the play started in an absolutely natural and informal manner. Meanwhile a further psychological purpose had been served; the members of the audience had been given time to absorb the atmosphere, and they

were far better attuned to it than they could have been had a medieval cathedral suddenly, by the rise of the curtain, been superimposed on the usual casual chatter of a waiting audience. Obviously, a play of this type must be directed so that the characters move off the stage naturally at the end of scenes that can never be "cut off" by the curtain. To break the action by a curtain in an exciting situation is, at its best, an unnatural theatrical convention, and so the inability to do this is not a great handicap. Elizabethan plays intended to be given in this fashion and Chinese plays are especially suitable for portrayal on a curtainless platform, but actually any play, even a modern realistic play, may be played successfully on such a platform, if it is directed with the special type of performance in mind and if sufficient ingenuity is spent in adapting the platform.

Even those plays that demand "curtain" situations may be played in a curtainless room. Darkness may be used instead of a curtain. When the play is ready to begin, a bell or gong can be sounded, then the lights turned off while the characters enter and take up their positions on the stage. The lights can then be turned up and the play started. A similar device may be used at the close. With the "curtain line" the lights may be turned out, the characters disappear, and when the lights come on again the empty stage announces the end of the play. If the play is being given out-of-doors, or if it is impossible to control the lights at the end of a scene, however dramatic, the actors may hold the position for a moment and then frankly and obviously drop the position and walk off. An audience will soon accept any convention, however unusual.

Even scene-shifting can be performed openly in an amusing and dramatic manner. For this purpose the scene-shifters, as well as the actors in

the play, should be dressed in costume. Thus in a Shakespearean play, Elizabethan pages should do the work, in a Molière play seventeenth-century French servants. Sometimes lines or amusing patter may be invented. Thus in a performance of the Chinese play *A Thousand Years Ago*, done without a front curtain, the scenes

through and with outspread arms called for silence; then he stated that the play was to take place in Old Cathay "outside of Peking Gate, the city wall." (Here he looked round for something to serve as the wall.)

"This curtain here will do, but strong and tall  
"you must imagine it, as with a frown



"PRUNELLA" (LAURENCE HOUSMAN), SHOWING DESIGN FOR FRONT OF HOUSE

were set by half-a-dozen Chinese coolies working under the direction of a Chinese property man. All the scene-shifters were in costume and make-up.

The performance was given in front of a beautiful grey cyclorama, and the scenes were changed by the moving of several small platforms, the use of brilliant Chinese screens and vases, and, above all, by the changing of lights. The audience, on coming into the auditorium, saw at one end only the great grey cyclorama, which hung straight down with a hidden slit in the centre. When the play was about to start a gong sounded, the lights went out, and a spotlight played on the centre of the curtain. The property man bounded

"its crenelled towers watch o'er the sleeping town.

"Now a Gate." (He loops up curtains to make an opening for the gate.)

"Lastly a row of severed heads." (Property men raise severed heads above the top of the curtain—shuddering pleasantly.) "Like evil plants they grow."

Any method of this kind is good fun, and is invaluable in putting the audience into a friendly frame of mind. Care must be taken, however, to see that it does not become overlong or so elaborate that it steals interest away from the actual play.

The use of the Chronicler in *Abraham*

*Lincoln* is essentially a method of "dramatic scene-changing."

Another possibility for producing plays without a theatre lies in the use of central staging, and this again is the original method of the Classic Theatre. In central staging, the play is given in the middle of the hall, while the audience is placed in a circle on all sides of the performers. Several rings of chairs may be placed around the central portion, which is then left clear as a playing space. If more than two or three rows must be accommodated, it becomes difficult for the spectators in the back rows to see the action. This difficulty may be avoided either by raising the back rows of the audience themselves and thus letting them look down on the central floor space, or by placing a platform in the centre of the playing space for the players themselves. If a platform is used, it can be small enough to take the main players only, and the platform, the entire space around it, and all the aisles should be used for playing. Excellent effects can, therefore, be gained with processions as well as with ordinary exits and entrances, in which the sense of acting and of gesture should be kept up until the player is well out of sight of the audience. If the central space can be lighted by overhead lights or by spots and floods from concealed sources, a large number of interesting effects will be obtained. The nearness of the actors to the audience will establish a sense of intimacy and give a feeling that is wholly different from the picture-frame stage. For some plays this is unusually effective.

One of the most successful plays to be given in this manner was Laurence Housman's *Prunella*. The central space with a small raised platform was reserved for a garden with a sundial, a stone bench, and a bed of tulips. The garden itself formed the scene of the entire play, and entrances into it were always made either from a house or through a gate, which was supposed to lead to a passing road. At one end of the hall, a delightful make-believe house was erected with a door, through which the characters entered, and a window, while a broad aisle through the audience connected this house with the central garden portion. At the opposite end of this aisle, which was continued up to the far end of the hall, was an iron gate making a second entrance. Characters who were supposed to be in the house when

the play opened, entered the playing space through the doors of the house and others came through the gate. The story is of a band of strolling mummers, led by Pierrot, who wander into the garden. He falls in love with Prunella, who lives in the house, guarded by her three aunts, and he runs away with her. He and his followers enter, of course, from the road, while Prunella and her aunts come from the house. When Prunella elopes with Pierrot, she climbs through the window, and they run out by the gate. The entire action works out very well and clearly, and takes place on the small platform, in the space around it and up and down the aisles (see Fig. A). By

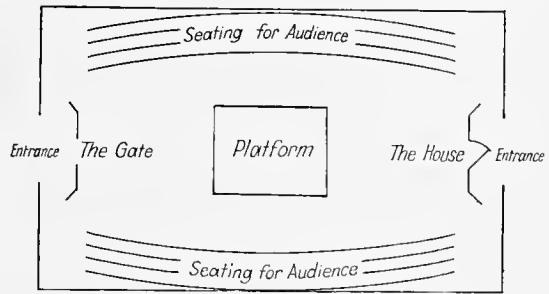


FIG. A. "PRUNELLA" SET FOR CENTRAL STAGING

having several aisles, each with a set piece of scenery or some property to mark a distinctive entrance at each end of the aisle, it is possible to have as many entrances as any play requires.

Molière's amusing farce, *The Doctor by Compulsion*, is another example of a play that can be successfully undertaken with central staging. In a production of this, the entire room was turned into a seventeenth-century hall. Canvases painted to represent tapestries were hung on the walls, and a huge chandelier of silver ribbons was hung over the little platform in the centre of the hall. The platform was small, about six feet square and eighteen inches high, with a single step around it so that it could be mounted easily. The only furniture on the platform was a small square box, covered with canvas, painted in the same manner as the platform itself. The audience during the play sat at small tables, on which refreshments were served. The action in the play takes place in many varied places, a hut, a place in the forest, a boudoir, a saloon, but no attempt was made to change the scene in any way. The place of the

action is unimportant, as the audience can learn just where the action is intended to be from the lines of the play.

The technique of successful central staging differs from that of playing against a wall with the audience entirely on the side. The play must be rehearsed so that the action turns first to one side and then to another, and the movement must be worked out with great care so that the backs of all the actors are never at one time turned in the same direction. The rule should be that every spectator should be able to see the face of at least one actor at any time. Thus, if three persons are talking, they should stand in a triangle each with his face to the centre; two persons must face in opposite directions, and never be left standing side by side and facing the same wall.

If the director who is in charge of a play for central staging constantly changes his own position, he will have no difficulty in working out stage pictures that will be interesting from every angle. As there cannot be much scenery in central staging, it is well to select a play in which the costumes can be especially brilliant, since they must give the tone to the play. Make-up must be careful and correct as the actors are near the spectators.

The lighting over the central playing area should be as varied as possible, and if large groups of actors are used, they must never be allowed to obscure the action of important characters. Thus, if soldiers have to be introduced into some play centrally staged, they should be kept against the setting at the end of one of the aisles and their officers only advanced into the centre to order the arrest of a certain character or to perform whatever business the play requires. Central staging thus gives great possibilities and opportunities for experiments. Its results can be so interesting that no group should be deterred from dramatic presentation merely because they have no stage, while those groups that have fully equipped stages would do well sometimes to adopt this different technique, both with a view to providing variety for their audience and also for the sake of their own training.

Whatever form of production is, however, decided upon, whether it be with a fully equipped stage, with a temporary stage, or without any stage, and merely by means of central staging, the producer must always bear in mind the fact that the modern conception of a play is that of the sum total of a number of impressions made upon the spectator.

A play is not just an intellectual conception of an incident gathered from the movements and the words of actors. It is not merely a series of pleasing sounds made upon the stage, or a sense of colour and form on the eyes, but it is an emotional reaction to all these things.

Play production becomes, therefore, an attempt to translate a conception or artistic vision into a medium that will affect the spectator in the same way that the artist has been affected, and therein lies the value of the communicableness of all art, and the fact that dramatic art becomes essentially a true art. Now the basis of all true art may be said to reside in its purpose, and it is just the purposefulness of modern dramatic art that has introduced a new attitude towards scenery, lighting, and costumes. Only a few years ago, the dramatic producer sent to the storehouse for a panelled or kitchen set, a wood set, etc., or whatever else the author required in the play. The wardrobe mistress sent to a theatrical costumier for a set of costumes used by a totally different producer in another production, and the electrician made out the light plot, which was usually calculated to show off the utmost extremes of his lighting plant without any reference to the main theme of the play. But, recently, in the great dramatic renaissance that has swept the country, all this has been changed. A production is conceived of as a great artistic design, which is the work of a group of artists studying together with sympathy and understanding. The first of these artists is the author who conceives the play. The others are those who produce it for him under the leadership of the director, and it is just this unity that gives to all modern production its beauty, its direction, and its driving force.

## THE ACTING MANAGER—II

By H. P. HOLLINGDRAKE

*Hon. Secretary, Bolton Operatic Society ; Life Member of the Council of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association*

HAVING outlined the general nature of the duties of the acting manager, we must now pay attention to details. His main job is the business of selling and allotting space in the theatre or hall in which the production is taking place; otherwise, the booking of the seats. Audiences are fickle at all times, particularly those that patronize amateur shows, and the really prudent acting manager must make such arrangements for booking as will give the least possible trouble and inconvenience to all concerned.

Mainly, the problem is one of handling a large body of subscribers, each of whom is entitled to an agreed number of seats for the performances. Where, perhaps, 500 subscribers, all having rights and privileges, have to be pleased, what is the acting manager to do? He must deal as fairly as possible with each one. There must be no primitive "first come, first served" method. Unseemly rushes and ill-tempered queues of subscribers on inclement evenings are unnecessary. I offer here the details of a method that has stood the test of over 30 years in practice. Its basis is a ballot. I assume that 500 subscribers pay 30s. each annually for six seats at 5s. each, and that bookings may be made for any one performance in the week or spread over the full week if necessary. These subscribers are privileged to book seats before the plans are open to the general public, so a week before the booking dates a ballot is conducted.

A specimen circular letter that can be used is given in the next column.

Each subscriber's name is written on a small card and the cards are placed in a suitable bag. Corresponding numbers are placed in another bag. Double or multiple subscriptions demand a like number of members' cards in their appropriate bag. Each subscription is, therefore, guaranteed a number. Names and numbers are then drawn out of the respective bags, and the numbers are

\_\_\_\_\_ Operatic Society  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
November, 19  
"\_\_\_\_\_"  
at the  
Grand Theatre, \_\_\_\_\_, December 4th to 9th  
\_\_\_\_\_

DEAR SIR OR MADAM,

THE BALLOT FOR THE ORDER OF BOOKING SEATS WILL BE HELD ON \_\_\_\_\_, AT THE \_\_\_\_\_ HOTEL, AT 6.30 p.m., AND A BOOKING VOUCHER STATING THE NUMBER YOU HAVE DRAWN WILL BE POSTED TO YOU THE SAME EVENING.

IT IS NOT NECESSARY FOR SUBSCRIBERS TO ATTEND THE BALLOT.

YOUR SUBSCRIPTION SHOULD BE PAID WHEN YOU BOOK YOUR SEATS ON \_\_\_\_\_ IN EXCHANGE FOR THE TICKETS TO WHICH YOU ARE ENTITLED, AND NOT BEFORE.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE BOOKING WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE NOTE ALSO THAT THERE WILL BE NO SEATS AVAILABLE FOR SUBSCRIBERS FOR THE MONDAY PERFORMANCE.

IN ORDER TO PREVENT ANY POSSIBLE DISAPPOINTMENT, SUBSCRIBERS ARE RESPECTFULLY REMINDED THAT THE SOCIETY DOES NOT ISSUE THEATRE TICKETS UNLESS SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE PAID.

THE AMOUNT OF YOUR SUBSCRIPTION IS — ENTITLING YOU TO — SEATS IN THE DRESS CIRCLE OR STALLS AS AVAILABLE AT THE TIME OF BOOKING.

Yours faithfully,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Hon. Acting Manager.

recorded on the prepared vouchers made out to subscribers. These have already been arranged in alphabetical order, and each member of the committee present has to deal with a section.

It is essential that such a ballot should be openly conducted by officers and acting members,

— AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY

“—————”

AT

THE GRAND THEATRE

19

VOUCHER FOR SIX SEATS IN THE  
DRESS CIRCLE OR STALLS



————— Hon. Acting Manager.

This Voucher will not admit to the Theatre, but must be exchanged for Tickets as per the following instructions—

The Seat Plan will be open to Subscribers at —————  
on —————  
from —————  
and on ————— from —————  
to —————.

As the Seat Plan will be open to the Public on THURSDAY, the —————, Seats cannot be guaranteed for Subscribers unless booked before that date.

SEATS MUST BE BOOKED IN THE ORDER OF THE NUMBERS BALLOTTED FOR AND ACCORDING TO THE TIME TABLE ON THE ANNEXED SHEET.

YOUR NUMBER IS



with, if possible, a representative of the local Press. It would be better still if two of the subscribers themselves could draw the names and numbers. Addressed envelopes are ready for the insertion

of the vouchers, and they are immediately sent out by post. Good organization and previous preparation will easily ensure this being done on the one evening.

These booking vouchers are the official instructions to the acting manager or his agents to issue to the subscribers six seat tickets each at the time, date, and place fixed for the booking, and the numbers drawn in the ballot show the order of precedence in which subscribers may book

MONDAY, —————			
NUMBERS		TIMES OF BOOKING	
			A.M.
1 to 25	. .	between	10.0 and 10.30
26 to 50	. .	„	10.30 „ 11.0
51 to 75	. .	„	11.0 „ 11.30

seats. On the booking voucher is printed a timetable of the approximate time at which it will be the turn of the subscriber to book. Subscribers with double or multiple subscriptions are permitted to book the whole of their seats on the lowest number drawn.

This scheme does not guarantee that seats will be available for any particular evening's performance, and those who draw high numbers in the ballot will have little or no chance of securing seats for the popular Friday or Saturday nights. It may be found that a few subscribers whose names are at the end of the list are unable to book seats for the only evening on which they can be present. Their subscriptions should be suspended for the season, and not treated as resignations.

The acting manager should make it a hard and fast rule that subscribers must pay their subscriptions at the time of the booking, the tickets issued being treated as receipts. The omission of this simplest of precautions is responsible for far too many societies having to present annual balance sheets showing too many “unpaid” or outstanding subscriptions.

Finally, the good acting manager must be the nearest approach to a superman that it is possible to find. He must have three essential qualities that are all too rarely found in combination— infinite tact, unflinching presence of mind, and an unconquerable patience.





*Photo by Foulsham & Banfield*

MR. SEYMOUR HICKS

(2477)



# ACTING IN COMEDY

By SEYMOUR HICKS

I STARTED my career on the stage as many other actors and actresses have begun—I walked on in a production of a drama, *In the Ranks*, by a writer who kept his name before the public for many years, Mr. George R. Sims, who had for collaborator another writer, Mr. Henry Pettitt, with an honoured name. That early start was made years ago and not in the West End. Since then I have played so many parts that I can claim as fact that cannot possibly be mistaken for fiction to have tested versatility, even though I may not always have proved it to the satisfaction of the tens of thousands of playgoers who have seen me in different parts of the world. My confessions, though I have not labelled them in this way, have been published in some of my books, *The Stage as I Know It*, *Between Ourselves*, etc. I intend to draw upon what I have written before for my few remarks on "Acting in Comedy." My last book, entitled *Acting* (Cassell), has a definite label, "A Book for Amateurs," and my dedication is intended for those who know how to interpret it. This is how it reads—

"This brilliant work is dedicated to the numberless professional actors who would have been wiser had they chosen any other calling, and to the countless amateur enthusiasts who I pray will not follow their example.

"It must of course follow as the paragraph the pen, that my friends will say I am partly dedicating this collection of words to myself. My reply is, 'How right they are.'

"And I will leave it to my enemies to defend my impertinent incursion into a great art."

It is because I believe that I have spent my life in the service of a great art—it is for my supporters, and critics, to put their own value on what I have done—and got a lot of pleasure out of the work that I take the trouble to express my own opinions on Acting in Comedy in the hope, rather than with the confidence, that something I say may be of use to amateurs or professionals who have found the magnetism of that great art irresistible.

I am not one of those professionals who think that amateurs are in their right place on the playing fields and out of place in the playhouse. I believe that to-day when economics, trade unionism, and science cannot be kept out of the lives of players and out of the organization and maintenance of their natural home, the theatre, that the amateur "is the bulwark of the theatre proper, the expert patron of my profession." Again, "it is the serious amateur actor who to-day stands guard at the Temple of Thespis, and therefore a share of her treasures have become his property by right of conquest." But my immediate task is not to justify the existence of the amateur or to explain the rapid development of the Amateur Movement, but to pass a few comments on Acting in Comedy.

First a word about acting. In modern comedies the public, influenced no doubt by modern journalism rather than by dramatic criticism, have been led to believe that actors do not act. "Refaned" speech is not correct speech. St. John Ervine has told thousands of newspaper readers this fact. Does the "natural conversation" of modern acting serve as example or warning?

I believe that the stage is better than either the pulpit or the platform for teaching purposes, but I do not believe that it should be turned into a classroom. From it the lesson can be given—but it should be a subtle interpretation through artistry. It is not old-fashioned to say that the actors of my youth knew more about speech and how to use it for interpretative purposes than some of the moderns who are type actors and actresses of the type that ought to be exterminated in the interest of "art for art's sake," also of "value for money." My own views set down in print and not in the spirit of Gerald Cumberland's stimulating book, *Set Down in Malice*, are "You may think that to be distinct you must elocute. Not at all. Nearly all the greatest actors in the world have been content only to be distinct, for they knew full well that pedantry is not part of passion,

and that comedy is anything but aided by over-perfect diction . . . Stage diction should be the standard of a nation's speech, and it is quite unpardonable that any amateur, let alone a professional, should even pronounce a single word incorrectly (unless the text demands it). There are quite enough highly educated murderers of our mother tongue in society to-day who, to be thought smart, distort words and their meaning, and as this is probably their chief occupation it would be unfair to rob them of their only creative work."

Modern comedies with their snippetty dialogue are an odd assortment. There are some that are not worth producing, and there are some that are considered to be old-fashioned which, in production, are more severe tests of the art of acting than any of the comedies that are popular with "the smart set." A discriminating eye and a cultivated taste are necessary, for there is a wide range of choice for amateurs who are interested in comedy. Why not work up from Tom Robertson, who was one of the moulders, if not the makers, of modern comedy, to the giants of yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow—Jones, Pinero, Carton, Grundy, Wilde, Barrie, Lonsdale, Shaw, Maugham, and others? Having made a selection—and it is not for me to be definite—the question arises: How are these comedies to be acted? And here I can be definite. Again I draw upon *Acting*: "*Good* acting should be *definite* acting, where sentences are started and finished, not slid into and shuffled out of. To be

indefinite has become so very fashionable, I presume, because to show any emotion to-day is not good form. But the sooner the actor realizes that to lead his audiences, and not to be led by them, the better for his art and the listeners themselves."

But as with elocution that leads to meaningless automatic speech, so with acting, which must be interpretation. Technique can be handmaiden or taskmaster: "Technique in acting is more than half the battle, given that the artist is a good one, for technique is the conjurer performing his tricks with deftness and certainty. The really fine actors, being born, do by instinct three-quarters of that which has to be acquired by those who are merely 'good,' whether it be that they are tragedians or comedians, for the technique of comedy is even more delicate than that required by the heavily draped muse."

You will see that I want you to think things out for yourselves. Your palate may be able to enjoy the choice delicacies that mine enjoys, but "you never can tell"—a Shavian title and phrase that serve many useful purposes. I think that a great deal depends upon whether the amateur as well as the professional is merely "good" or accidentally "born." In whichever class you are, you will do well to draw the right moral from my sentence: "Study the method of those actors of your day who are superlatively good and you will, if you can understand not only *why* they do certain things but *how* they do them, improve your performances a hundred per cent."



# PRODUCING COMEDY

By C. B. PURDOM

*Author of "Producing Plays," etc. ; Dramatic Critic ; Founder of Letchworth Players and Welwyn Garden City Theatre ; Hon. Treasurer, National Festival of Community Drama ; Editor of "New Britain"*

I SAID in an earlier contribution that the easiest thing in the theatre is to get an audience to laugh. People go to the theatre ready for laughter. Yet comedy is the most difficult type of play to perform. The reason is that it demands perfection, being itself one of the two perfect forms of drama. Tragedy is the other perfect form; but it is easier to disguise shortcomings in tragedy than in comedy. Comedy uses the material of life as it is and tragedy always a transformation of life, so that anyone can quickly see where comedy goes wrong. To define comedy as the art of throwing light upon life would not be far wrong.

A comedy is a comic play, but, unlike farce, it induces reflection. The laughter in comedy leaves something behind. In farce, you laugh and forget; in comedy you have to remember, if only for a moment. In comedy laughter is not raised for its own sake, any more than terror is raised for its own sake in tragedy. There are jokes in comedy, but comedy is not a mere matter of jokes, for a joke leads to laughter that ends in itself. Laughter in comedy ends in an effect upon thought or feeling.

Comedy is essentially an ironical, satirical, paradoxical, critical, or sentimental comment on life. The comment is essential. In comedy we laugh with an object—not ours, perhaps, but that of the comic writer. We are hurt by satire, perplexed by paradox, stimulated by criticism, or moved by sentiment. After witnessing a comedy we are not as we were before.

There are three main forms of comedy, which can be divided into any number of sub-divisions—

Comedy of poetry, of which Shakespeare is the great example.

Comedy of manners, of which Congreve is the great example.

Comedy of intelligence, of which Molière is the great example.

The living English comedy writers in the

second and third of these forms are Noel Coward and Bernard Shaw. I can think of none in the first; and only Shaw approaches the classic example. There are intermediate forms of comedy in which manners and intelligence are combined, as in the plays of Somerset Maugham, or manners and sentiment, as in the plays of Sir J. M. Barrie. Also, there is tragi-comedy, as in the plays of the late John Galsworthy. The plays of all these writers are subject to the comic spirit, whatever their subject, and no matter with what object they were written.

There are, of course, levels of comedy. Some comic writers aim high as do Shaw and Galsworthy; some have lower aims, as Noel Coward and Barrie. But they all aim at touching their audiences through laughter.

I have said that the laughter has meaning; it also has detachment. Comedy is, above all other plays, the mirror of the age. The age is seen truly, but at a distance. Realism is reduced to a minimum; indeed, it is necessary that while the reality of what is shown is recognized there is no confusion of the spectator with it. We are not seeing life in comedy, but a selection from it, a pattern of it, something formal and artificial. That is what makes the greatness of comedy in drama. It is life re-created by the artist, the formless life of the real world given the meaning of form on the stage.

The means employed in comedy is not situation, but character; the laughter arises out of personality. Thus, the intention of the comic writer is always to isolate personality, to plumb the secrets of individuals. There is conflict between personalities, of course, for without conflict there is no drama; but the conflict reaches its height in the individual fighting with himself, exposing himself, making himself an object of laughter to the gods. This is true of every great comic character—Falstaff, Millamant, or Tartuffe.

Though comedy is the mirror of the age, the comic writer thinks more of persons than of the age. The weakness of modern comedy is that it tends to lose itself in abstractions. The chief fault in Bernard Shaw's plays is that he tends to sacrifice character to his theme. He is so anxious to attack the intelligence of the mob that he sub-

controlled and disciplined personality. Too many of our comedy actors and actresses depend upon their personality alone, upon their natural force, originality, smartness, or even good looks. Therefore, they do not go far unless they have great luck. How many actors can we think of, any of us who know the stage, who have nothing to recommend



*Photo by Scott & Wilkinson, Cambridge*

"MADAM PEPITA," PRODUCED AT THE CAMBRIDGE FESTIVAL THEATRE  
A conventionalized garden scene

ordinates personality to his paradoxes. The proof that Shaw is a great playwright, however, lies in the number and variety of his characters—no dramatist has more of them—and each stands out as a distinct personality. Even the smallest character in a Shaw play has a life of its own.

Now we can see how comedy should be produced. The elements are laughter, meaning, form, and character. Taken together, this means style in acting. The actor in comedy sets the style for the stage. There is no style to surpass that of the comedy actor, for even tragedy depends upon it. Therefore, in comedy, the actor is all-important—his efficiency, technique, and personality. I emphasize personality, but what is required is not personality in the raw, but

them but pleasing, forceful personalities, plus the experience they have been able to pick up? The comedy actor has to go into training and keep in training, practising every day to keep fit—fit not simply in a physical sense, but as an artist.

The reason why amateurs are rarely able to achieve much in comedy is that they have no opportunity of acquiring style. They have insufficient practice. One often meets an amateur player who has personality, who might be made into an actor of merit; but he seldom can get beyond the indication of promise. I have never seen a comedy part played really well by any amateur, though I have seen a few who had talent out of the ordinary. Yet if amateurs intend to do

anything on the stage, they must attempt comedy, knowing as they should that they are bound to fail.

The best comedy for amateurs in my opinion is poetic comedy, and above all, Shakespeare. They will learn most from that. Shakespearean comedy is in truth the foundation of all comedy,

wrong. Shakespeare demands perfection in acting, and so does Shaw. They rarely get it, even on the professional stage. What the amateur has to realize is that though the dialogue helps him and has merits of its own, he has to put everything he knows into his part to make a success of it. The audience may laugh and give him



*Photo by Scott & Wilkinson, Cambridge*

ARISTOPHANES' "THE BIRDS," PRODUCED AT THE CAMBRIDGE FESTIVAL THEATRE

A conventionalized setting

and no actor who has not schooled himself in Shakespearean plays is ever likely to become a master in his art.

So an amateur company should every little while put on a Shakespearean play as an exercise in acting, which means that they must play it and every part in it, for all they are worth. If they can get hold of a modern comedy in verse they should do the same. Audiences may not like what they do, especially in modern verse plays, but they should, none the less, perform them for the sake of what they can learn.

No matter what kind of comedy is performed, the actors must be chosen with care. No comedy plays itself, though Shakespeare seems to do so, and Shaw is said to require little acting. That is

applause; but the critic will know how little the actor has contributed unless he has worked with all his might.

Comedy is the test of the actor. In doing it he must concentrate all his powers of expression and set alight all the imagination that he has. He has to bring the part to birth in his own being. Acting in comedy does not mean saying the words and giving the right gestures and looking the part, but making an appeal to the audience's imagination. The comedy actor must himself speak, his own meaning must be heard in the voice of the part. That is the difference between acting and mimicry, between acting and pretence, between being natural and art.

The comedy actor must have ease, of course,

but the ease must come from absorption in his part. He must give himself entirely to it, until there is, as it were, nothing of himself left. That is one half of his task. The other is that

character lives and the audience is infected with his passion, and at the same time he is fully collected and observes what he does as though it were done by another man.

Comedy must be acted in this way or it fails. There is nothing mechanical in it, no matter how many times the part is played. The player cannot afford to think of other things as he plays. He must have his mind on his part and all his faculties devoted to it.

No wonder, therefore, that the amateur can do so little, for he has no chance to gain mastery over himself as an actor. Yet he must do his best, and if he knows what is required of him he can at least aim aright.

The staging of comedy requires the same sense of style as its playing. Nothing slipshod will do. Simplicity is never wrong, and comedy can be played in curtain settings; but it need not be. Remember that comedy reflects life; therefore, the staging should reflect what life appears to be. There should be the suggestion of actual rooms and gardens, and the designer and producer should keep close to fact. But they must also use their imaginations. They must not be mere imitators any more than the actors. Comedy staging offers great opportunities to producers, though it is exacting work.

Costume must be accurate. This is always possible, and the necessity for it should not be treated lightly. Make-up must be given the closest attention. Comedy can easily be spoiled by careless dressing and make-up.



"WHEN THE HEART IS YOUNG"

A conventionalized treatment of a modern drawing room comedy by the Welwyn Garden City Theatre (produced by C. B. Purdom)

he must maintain detachment from himself so that he can do everything consciously. The secret of acting is abandonment and detachment—at the same moment. The actor loses himself in ecstasy, and also, and simultaneously, is in complete control. There are, therefore, heat and coldness in the true actor. He burns with fire, so that the

# THE GROUND PLAN OF THE SET

By HAL D. STEWART

*Author of "Rizzio's Boots," "The Blind Eye," etc.*

AFTER it has been decided to produce a play, one of the first things that is required is a ground plan of the set or sets that are to be used. Preparation of the ground plan must always be the first step in designing scenery. After the designer has studied the play, and decided what style his designs shall take, his next task is to commit his ideas to paper, so that they may be handed to the producer for his approval, and so that they may finally be passed on to the carpenters and scenic artists, whose job it is to make the scenery to the designs that are supplied.

The ground plan enables the designer to see whether his ideas are practical, and whether the stage is large enough for him to carry out his intentions. It will often enable him at the outset to eliminate impracticable ideas and to prevent the waste of valuable time.

The ground plan is also necessary for the producer. He requires it to write up the moves of the play. He may object to the first plan that is submitted because it conflicts with his own ideas and prevents him carrying out the production as he wishes. If he sees the plan before the scenery is designed time and work are often saved.

The ground plan should be drawn to scale: a plan not to scale may be worse than useless. This may sound obvious, but rough plans are often sketched out in a hurry, perhaps on an odd piece of paper or the back of an envelope, merely to demonstrate a particular point. As the plan is not to scale the point is frequently either not demonstrated or demonstrated wrongly, and a false impression is given.

Start with a plan of the stage on which the play is to be produced. This may sound unnecessary. You may say that you can easily carry in your head the dimensions of the stage, and ensure that your setting comes within the limits prescribed. This may be so, but it may not, and the time spent in drawing in the plan of the bare stage is well spent.

To draw the plan, you require a few ordinary

drawing instruments and materials. You should have a drawing board, drawing paper, a T square, set squares, compasses, dividers, a scale, and a *sharp* pencil. The end of the T square resting on the side of the drawing board enables you to draw parallel horizontal lines. The set square resting

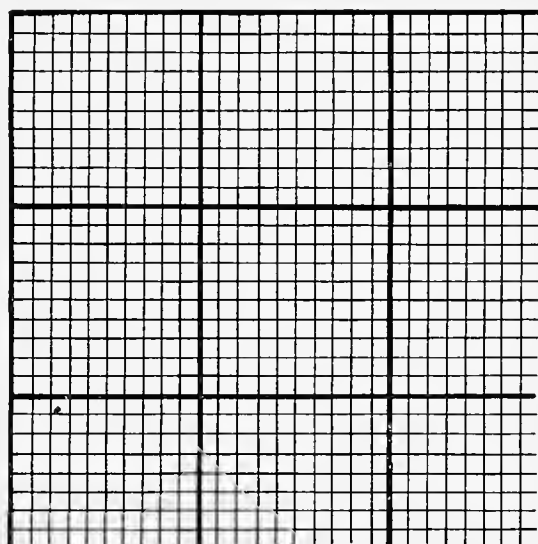


FIG. 1

on the T square enables you to draw parallel vertical lines. The set squares also enable you to set off angles of 30, 45, and 60 degrees. The dividers are necessary to measure distances on the scale, and to transfer these to your paper. These are the instruments that would be required by a draughtsman. You, however, may not be a draughtsman, and may yet be interested in and capable of designing scenery. Should this be so I commend the use of squared paper as an easy, quick, and sufficiently accurate method of drawing the plan.

Ordinary squared paper ruled in inches and tenths of inches may be obtained from most stationers. Fig. 1 shows a piece of this paper for

the benefit of those who are not already familiar with it. The large squares are inches; the smaller squares, tenths of inches. When using this paper your scale must be some multiple of a tenth of an inch.

In Figs. 2-5 the scale shown is the scale that

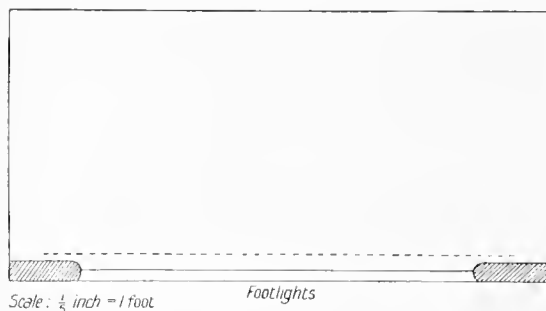


FIG. 2

was used for the original plan. This has, of course, been reduced and the squares of the paper have been omitted for reproduction.

Fig. 2 shows the plan of a bare stage. The scale is taken as one fifth of an inch (that is two small squares) to the foot. Thus, were the plan drawn on squared paper it could be seen at a glance that the footlights occupy one foot in breadth, and that the proscenium opening is twenty-two feet. The shaded portion represents the walls of the proscenium arch, and the dotted line the position of the curtain. The thickness of the walls that surround the stage is not shown because this is unnecessary.

If you are not familiar with the theatre, it is worth while also to draw the entrances to the stage from the dressing rooms. If there are any obstructions, such as pillars, these must be shown, whether they are likely to interfere with the acting area or not. They may interfere with backing or with the opening of a door.

Fig. 3 shows the plan of a stage that presents some of these difficulties. Amateur societies have frequently to contend with structural problems

that are far greater than those that are shown on this plan. Probably many more amateur productions take place on such stages than on the more orthodox stage that is free from these defects. The stage in Fig. 3 has a proscenium opening of 22 ft. and a depth of 16 ft. from the curtain line to the back wall. The width from wall to wall is 35 ft. However, 16 ft. is not the effective practical depth, because a step, 1 ft. high by 3 ft. wide, runs along the length of the back wall. Further, the total width of the stage is ineffective because there are four structural pillars, two on either side. These pillars are 1 ft. square.

Assume that you have been told to design an interior set for this stage. The room is a modern lounge hall, with a practical French window about the centre of the back wall. Doors are required in the right and left walls. The script says that the room is bright and sunny. To give this impression, you decide that the French window must be a prominent feature. The door on the actor's right is to be a double door: this is important as most of the entrances are made through it. You decide, therefore, that it must be upstage

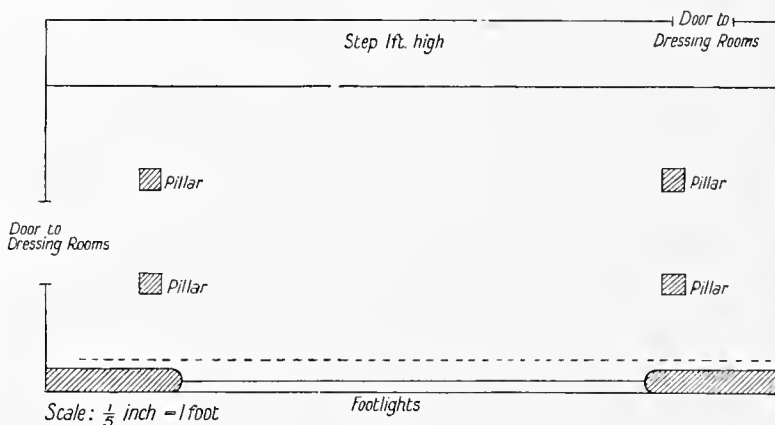


FIG. 3

—that is, towards the back of the stage. A large number of characters appear, and the producer has told you that he wishes as much stage room as possible.

The first problem that confronts you is the step at the back. The fact that there is a French window in the back wall means that there must be a backcloth behind it. The step might be eliminated by hanging the backcloth immediately



in front of it. This would mean, however, that the French window, and therefore the back wall of the set, would have to be at least three feet still further forward, and this would leave a depth of only ten feet from the footlights to the back of the set. As the producer has asked for as much

entrances and exits occur in the play, and if they do, whether they can be altered.

Let us assume that, as is usually the case, there is communication between the two doors. You decide, therefore, to hang the backcloth against the back wall, and to have the back of the set in front

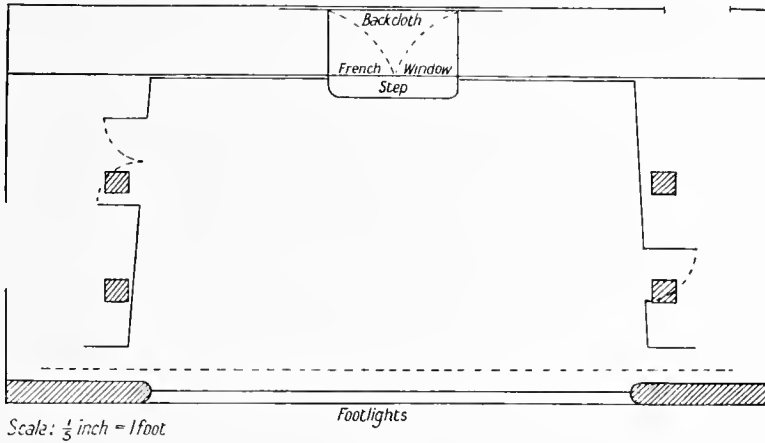


FIG. 4

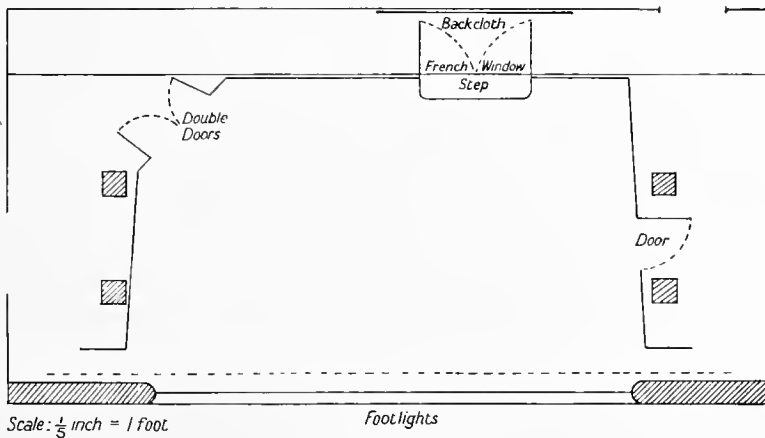


FIG. 5

room as possible, you decide that this arrangement will not meet requirements.

Now it must be considered whether there is a means of communication behind, between the two doors to the stage. If there is, the scenery may be set to the back wall of the stage and players who require to go out on one side and to enter on another can go round behind. If not, it will be necessary to find out whether such

of, and hard against, the step. The French window will be on the step, so that the players who enter by it will step down into the room. This is both permissible and effective. A step of 12 in., however, is rather high, so you decide to place another step, 6 in. high, in front of the existing step. There will now be two steps leading up to the window. This arrangement will finally remove any impression that the step is there by

accident or force of circumstance. It may not occur, even to those who know of the existence of the step on the stage, that there has been any ulterior motive.

You decide to make the window 6 ft. wide, each of its doors being 3 ft., in order that it will be as impressive as possible. (I assume, of course, that there is sufficient height to allow of the height of the design being sufficient to carry this width.) The set, you decide, shall be an ordinary three-sided set in order that there shall be as much stage room as possible. For the same reason you decide to have the angle between the back and side walls as small as possible, and to make all the doors open off-stage. You then draw the ground plan as shown in Fig. 4.

This design, it is quickly seen, is not practical. The doors are shown in their position when open, and it will be observed that the single door and the lower half of the double door cannot be opened because of the pillars. Also, the French window, when it is fully open, fouls the backcloth, and does not allow a player to pass. Further, the double doors are probably invisible to many people who are at the left of the auditorium. If you wish to verify this, it is a good plan to draw in the line of sight in pencil. It can be rubbed out afterwards to prevent confusion.

Fig. 5 shows one solution of the problem. By placing the double door across the corner, both halves can be opened as wide as is likely to be necessary. It is in a prominent position, and entrances made there will be effective. The acting area is necessarily reduced, but not considerably. The French window has been made slightly smaller, so that its doors, when open, clear the backcloth. It has been moved towards the left to balance the new position of the double door. The single door has been moved slightly upstage, between the pillars, which it clears when open.

There is no absolute criterion in stage design. It is bound to be to a great extent a matter of personal opinion, but most people will agree that the less symmetrical design of Fig. 5 is more interesting than that of Fig. 4. The important point, however, is that Fig. 5 is practical, and that Fig. 4 is not.

The advantage of drawing these plans on squared paper will be readily appreciated. It is quicker, and mistakes are less likely to be made.

Distances do not require to be measured off a scale, but may be ascertained by simply counting the squares. If it is required to measure a distance across the squares, this may be done by using the edge of another piece of squared paper.

When it comes to the next step—adding to the plan, furniture, and properties that occupy floor space—the use of squared paper saves a great deal of time. It is here that the beginner frequently goes astray. While he may draw the outline of the plan accurately to scale, he is apt to fill in the furniture in a rough and ready manner. It is essential that the plan of the furniture should also be to scale, as it is only in this way that the producer can know what parts of the acting area are free for the movement of his characters.

The first plan should be submitted to the producer for his approval, and the position of the furniture definitely decided. After this, it will probably be necessary to draw a fresh plan for the designer's own use, and it will be necessary to provide the producer with a duplicate from which he can work out his production. The producer's plan will require to be a fair size, possibly larger than the original. Here, again, if squared paper has been used, it is a simple matter to enlarge the original, but if the plan has been made on ordinary drawing paper the enlargement will take some time, as each distance will, of course, have to be measured and transferred to the new plan after making the necessary alteration for the difference in scale. This is not really difficult, but it may be a little tedious, particularly to those who are unaccustomed to the use of drawing instruments. I suggest, therefore, that if you do not use squared paper, you should make a point of making your original plan large enough for the producer's requirements. Any number of copies of this can then easily be made by placing a blank sheet of drawing paper on the drawing board, and laying your plan on top of it. By pricking both sheets with a pin at all the necessary points and joining up these pin pricks on the blank sheet with pencil lines, a duplicate may be made quickly.

The reason why the producer's plan requires to be fairly large is that he will use it to work out the moves in the production, and on the plan itself will probably move about small blocks of wood or pieces of paper representing the various characters in the play.

# TRIANGULATION AND STAGE PROPERTIES

By F. E. DORAN

*Secretary, Manchester Playgoers' Club*

ONE of the main aspects of production is setting the stage, and the wise producer cogitates a little before jumping to conclusions or establishing finality in this important matter.

Setting the stage is a phrase that covers the appearance of the scene and "set" or position of the properties and furnishings. There are few scenes in which the whole of the stage is blank of obstruction, and interior scenes nearly always demand some sort of furniture and such-like props. It is the placing of these that requires consideration, as it is not enough to say "put this here" and "put that there" because there are two main things to consider: first, the movements of the actors, and, secondly, the vision of the audience. The components of the setting can be divided into two parts, the active and the passive. The active parts are those units necessary for action of the play, i.e. if a paper has to be extracted from a safe and the robber is caught in the act, then the safe is part of the play and must be placed in such a position that everybody in the theatre can see the action. The passive units are those necessary to fill in the scene, such as a side-board, or curtains, a pedestal, and so on, and should be used to create atmosphere and suggest periods. These passive elements should be reduced to a minimum so as not to clutter the stage with unnecessary impediments that will hamper the actor.

It is extraordinary how little a stage wants when once the centre is occupied. A settee, a desk, a table, and necessary chairs will fill the stage, and curtains and pictures of the right kind will do the rest. Luxury or poverty ideas can be conveyed by vases and flowers, tablecloths, and so on. These points are, of course, obvious and are merely mentioned to suggest a line of thought, which, though obvious, is not always acted on. Plays of modern life are easily set, as modern fur-

nishing notions are based on elimination, with simple colourings, but demanding great skill and taste. Everything must be in harmony. Victorian settings, on the other hand, are full of detail, odds and bits, bric-à-brac, and what-nots, and a producer must exercise great skill and more than a little wit if he is to get the right effect and yet not clutter up the stage like a museum. It is the EFFECT that is desired, not the FACT, and too much realism will be destructive of the effect, rather than helpful.

Another important feature of a setting is the case, speed, and safety with which the properties can be placed in position and taken away. While many hands make light work, small stages do not allow for large staffs. Consequently a producer must design for quick changes with few people, and if a man has to waste time bringing off a couple of vases, a clock, an aspidistra, and so on, it is likely the play will drag in the intervals.

In a play where visual details are necessary for period atmosphere, the producer must keep his objects of suggestion fully visible, and not waste space by having bits of things where they cannot be seen. They might as well not be there as there and useless. Consequently, he should plan the position of his big stuff first, beginning with the active essentials, then the dominant passives (curtains, windows, doors, etc.), and then select salient points for suggestive details. These points depend on the general set, but the mantelpiece is one, the view through the window another, and perhaps a wall angle.

The use of sight lines in the early planning will greatly help the preliminary design, and when the active elements of the set have been marked on the plan, and allowances made for the movements of the cast, it will be found that the opportunities for turning the stage into a shop window have considerably decreased.

A tricky setting, which often trips up even a

good producer, is one in which a light on the table centre is necessary.

In Fig. 1, which stage directions often ask for, the figure at the table will hardly be seen, if the only light on the stage is that of the lamp or candle. Only the lamp will be seen, and like the



FIG. 1

headlights on a car, will only dazzle the spectator. It is extraordinary how often this mistake is made, even in professional productions. The right place for the actor is at the *side* of the table, so that the light from the lamp gets the face at such an angle that everybody can see the movement of the lips. This angle can be of any degree provided the candle is farther from the audience, be it ever so slight a difference. If it is imperative that the actor should be behind the lamp then the actor must be well *above* the lamp, so that the spectator can see the face without glare.

In Fig. 2 the spectator would not see the actor's face until the face was at least 6 in. higher above the lamp. If this cannot be arranged, a good tip is to tone down the light toward the audience by putting a pattern on the lamp shade—this acts as a light baffle—or having some flowers, or a loaf, or some such obstruction to prevent the light glaring at the audience.

When setting out the producer must consider the aspect of space, and when steps, a dais, or a rostrum have to come into the picture, he must calculate a little before putting the prop in hand. He must remember that a step higher than 6 in. is not easy stepping, and that a foot tread less than 7 in. is unsafe. If his stage is only 18 ft. deep, it is of no use designing a grand cathedral entrance with about ten steps until he has planned out what ten steps, say 8 in. deep, will take off his stage space. Ten steps, each 8 in. deep (10 in.  $\times$  8 in. = 80 in.) will bite off over 6½ ft. of depth, which leaves him only 11 ft. to the footlights, which is insufficient for free movement for four people in line. In the other dimension, allowing a 4 in. rise to each step, the base of his cathedral door must be 10 in.  $\times$  4 in. = 40 in. from the stage level, and if his door is 7 ft. high, he is getting the top out of sight on a 12 ft. proscenium opening. If that is what he wants, well and good, but it is advisable that he should know the exact effect he will get before ordering the stage manager to put the work in hand.

The same rule of precaution applies to all the gear that will be upon the stage; and desks, settees, sideboards, doors, windows, can all be calculated in advance, so that when the dress rehearsal comes there is no hitch that reasonable foresight could have avoided.

No doubt my readers will remember that definition of the equator as an imaginary line running round the earth. On the stage there is an equally

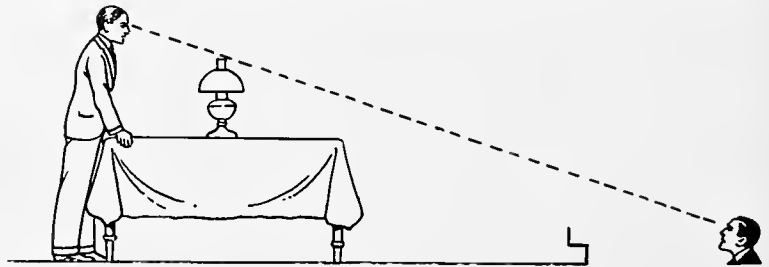


FIG. 2

imaginary point that we might christen the dramatic centre. It is arrived at by the use of the sight lines of previous plans, and has to be calculated afresh for each new stage. But when it is once established, the producer's work is enormously lightened. The idea is to divide the stage

into sections, each of which has a place in the scheme of production. The plan appears as follows, based, it must be remembered, on the sight line (see Fig. 3).

The angle  $B-A-C$ , is always in sight as a whole, and the centre of that triangle is the most valuable position on the stage. Plot the line  $C-D$  and intersect it with a line drawn from  $E$  to  $F$  crossing

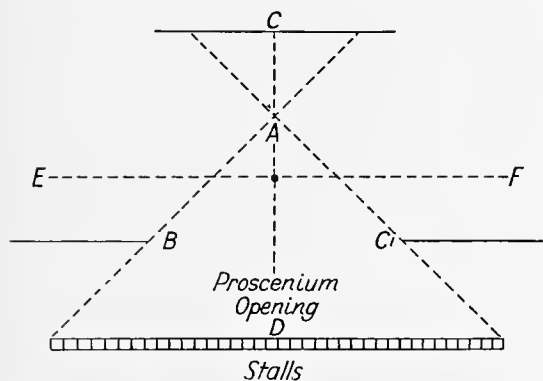


FIG. 3

the middle points of  $A-B$  and  $A-C_1$ , (see Fig. 3). The centre dot is the imaginary dramatic centre and from it the essential positions and groupings can be made, and supplementary action and crowd work dealt with in the secondary angles. When this has been drawn to scale, say  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. to the foot, and re-marked full size on the rehearsal floor, only a careless producer will find any part of his essential action being smashed by bad crossings.

Such a plan will be of enormous assistance in arranging positions for the units of a set, not least important of which are the doors and windows. An intelligent understanding of this method will act as a short cut for ascertaining the size of flats, wings, and so on.

This matter of measurement is often overlooked, and though it is really a matter for the stage manager, yet a producer should know the limits within which he has to work, otherwise he may find himself with an absurd wall consisting of a door, a window, and a fireplace without any supporting brickwork, which is obviously wrong, simply because he did not calculate that 4 ft. and 5 ft. and 4 ft. make 13 ft., and there would be no room for 2 ft. fillers. A preliminary measurement would have led to the elimination

of the fireplace or the window. With proper measurements neat joints will ensue, and there will be nothing slipshod about the appearance of the set. Essential doors and windows can be properly related to the centre and the units on the stage.

Recently, I came across an excellent example of the application of this principle in a production of *The Waltz Dream* by Mr. Alan Pitt. The problem was to employ as many as possible in the chorus, provide as much room as possible for principals, and have a bandstand, chairs, tables, a solo dance, and room for twelve couples waltzing. Further, the impression of a crowded and popular garden restaurant had to be conveyed to the audience.

The total stage area available was 462 sq. ft., 21 ft. wide, and 22 ft. deep. The proscenium opening, less  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ft. each side, equalled 16 ft.

### Back Wall

Blank Stage  
to contain "Waltz Dream" setting.

Bandstand

7 musicians, Piano, Big  
drum.

Steps

Waltz for 12 couples.

Solo Dance.

Diners. Tables. Chairs. Chorus.

Proscenium

FIG. 4

When the large working diagram (Fig. 4) has been examined, I would suggest that a few experiments be made as a sort of puzzle or test of capacity as a producer, or to find out how many methods of utilizing these factors may be evolved. I will reset the problem in the form of an examination question.

*The setting is a Viennese garden restaurant.*

*Trees. Bandstand. Garden effect. Evening. Lights. Gaiety. Happy crowd of diners. The bandstand to hold orchestra of 7, a piano, and big drum. It must have steps to the band platform. Provide for a chorus of people, a solo dance, a waltz for 12 couples, the stage dressed with tables surrounded by diners. How would you arrange your tables, chairs, and wings to give good views of the solo incidents, and yet keep the impression of a crowded garden, remembering that the steps of the bandstand must not be covered?*

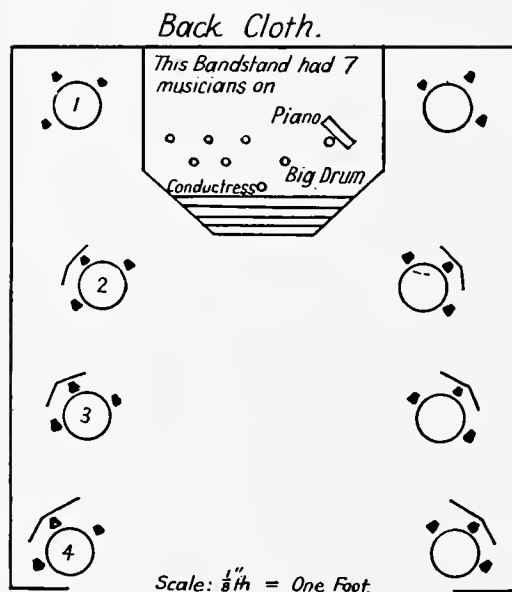


FIG. 5

Before reading farther the reader should consider the solution.

Note that the problem is not one of producing these effects, but of getting them on to a stage of 462 sq. ft., with a proscenium opening of 16 ft.

The integral problem is the provision of a good clear space in the stage centre. Two things are essential, and cannot, therefore, be eliminated, the bandstand and the solo dance. Consequently, space must go to the bandstand, say 80 sq. ft. It must be a dominant feature of the set. That leaves 382 sq. ft. for dressing the stage with atmosphere, diners, waiters, tables with flowers, etc., and the dancers.

Each table *without* chairs is 2 ft. across, each chair takes (at  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ft. by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ft.)  $2\frac{1}{4}$  sq. ft. The

projection of the wings reduces the available space to the 16 ft. proscenium opening, decreasing to 14 ft. at the back along the line of the 22 ft. depth.

Each reader may evolve different solutions, reorganize the groupings of Mr. Pitt, and alter the number of wings, the shape of the bandstand, and so on. But I present Mr. Pitt's plan (Fig. 5) here as a real solution that can be departed from only in detail.

The ingenuity in the plan is the provision of the pockets at the top end right and left of bandstand. By angling or curving the bandstand, plenty of space is provided for the chorus to move on and off, particularly in the difficult waltz for twelve couples. These dancers were also seen at the tables, but when they got up to dance the illusion of great crowds was kept up by their seats being taken by members of the chorus who were waiting behind the chairs and who were occasionally seen by the audience as couples wandering through the woods.

It will be observed that the tables and chairs are unseen to a large extent by the audience at the sides. But what one side cannot see the other can.

To provide space these chairs and three wings were deliberately pushed back as far as possible to leave the centre clear. This is an example of the exploitation of the imagination of the audience. A garden scene such as this is nearly always symmetrical, i.e. one side repeats the other. Consequently, when the audience on the prompt side see tree wings and gay parties at tables on the off prompt side the mind's eye completes the invisible scene. Thus, the stage looks larger, and the effect of a crowd is maintained by applying the principle of "splitting," by which one half the world of the audience imagines how the other half lives.

It should be noted that this plan enabled Mr. Pitt to have on his stage no fewer than fifty-five people at one time.

There is nothing empiric about a good set. It does not just come of itself. Its effectiveness is the result of knowledge of the craft, and a careful selection and elimination of details. The maximum effect with a minimum of means is a good slogan for the producer as it is for any other artist, and though these tips may be redundant to some of my readers who have evolved their own technique, the beginner will not find the foregoing useless.

## RICHARD OF BORDEAUX

By NEVIL TRUMAN

*Hon. Secretary, Nottingham Playgoers' Club*

THE pendulum again swings. During the three Edwards men revolted from long trailing skirts and their clothes became curtailed. In Richard II's reign they adopted a sort of compromise, and wore short dresses with trailing sleeves. The clever young king was much in advance of his day in his peace policies, but he loved display of a less harmful sort than war, that is, in pageantry and costume. It became an age of extravagance in dress, in material, cut, and adornment. Dagging was applied to everything. This was the scalloping, or circular, or leaf-shaped cutting to the edges of the clothes, producing an effect like the mantling that surrounds a shield of arms. Parti-colouring continued, and increased to such an extent that a really smart man never dreamed of wearing two shoes alike. But it was in the headgear of the women that design really attained its height. The simple wimple swelled out; the side hair nets did the like, and we arrive at the beautiful, reticulated head dress, and the "Juliet" caul.

The standard dresses are the *houppelande* overcoat and the Zouave-like *super cotehardie* jacket. Buttons were sewn on in great profusion, and it should be remembered that these were bead shaped, and not the modern flat buttons. Trains were much in vogue, and the ladies' skirts were gored to form a wide, many-folded frock.

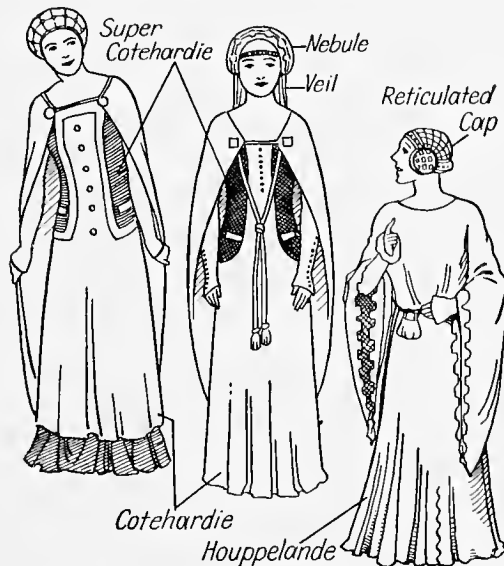
### DRESS

The *Cotehardie* (men and women) (see summary), was adopted by the women as well as the men and was now jewelled.

The *Tabard* (men) is the heraldic surcoat also already described. Since the arms of the wearer were embroidered upon it, it became a kind of visiting card, since everyone who was anyone understood heraldry.

The *Houppelande* (men and women) was also called a pelicon, and was an overcoat worn over the *cotehardie*. It had a high bell-shaped collar,

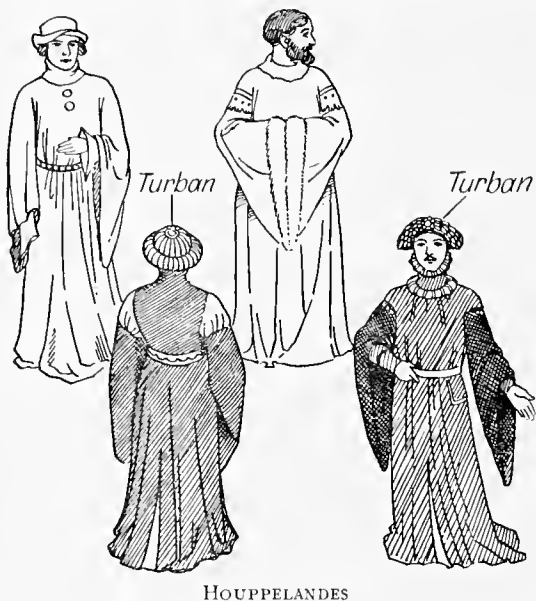
standing stiffly up round the neck, and long, full sleeves with dagged edges, cut like surplice sleeves. It was a full-length dress, buttoned down its entire length with many small buttons set closely together. It could also be buttoned for a few inches down the collar, with the rest not



buttoned. One side was slashed from knee to hem. It was lined occasionally with fur, but more often with a contrasting colour, and the sleeves were turned back at the wrist so as to show this lining. The back part often trailed on the floor. The tight fitted sleeves of the *cotehardie* showed under the *houppelande* sleeves where their upper part was cut away. The collar was similarly rolled, in which case the two top buttons were unfastened. Young men wore a *houppelande* that stopped abruptly just below the waist, the skirt becoming a mere frill, but the sleeves were as long as in the other type. This looked rather odd, the huge sleeves, almost sweeping the floor, being stuck on to a tight little jacket, with tights.

The *Cloak* (men) was fastened on the right shoulder.

The *Baldrick* (men) was a gaily embroidered or chased metal belt, from which hung the *Gipciere*, a purse-pouch suspended by two straps. The belt was narrow. One end fell in front, and



was often in leather. It also supported a finely chased or carved dagger, or this was worn on a separate ribbon or chain.

*Tippets* (women) continued in fashion. They were long strips of material reaching from elbow to knee, and they were set in an over sleeve that ended just above the elbow.

*Mantles* (women) were simple, as before, open in front, and fastened by two silk cords across the chest.

The *Surcoat* or *Super Cotehardie* (women) (see summary) was worn over the cotehardie. In front, its edges nearly met, and later revealed a narrow front, pointed at the bottom, and adorned with a few buttons. It was a sleeveless waistcoat. This garment came in during the end of Edward III's reign, and continued until the end of Henry IV's reign.

The *Gown* (women) was long and loose, but had the favourite tight sleeves, buttoned at the wrist, and overhanging the back of the hand. It also had a V or a square cut neck.

### LEGS (Men)

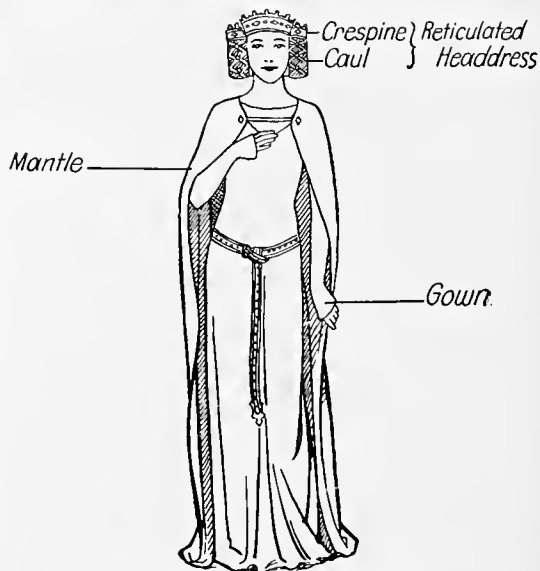
Tights were parti-coloured, each leg being different, or each leg itself was divided into two colours vertically.

### FEET

*Crakowes* (men and women) took their name from the Polish city of Cracow. Like much else in the period, they were exaggerated as much as six inches long in their points. To stiffen this projection, they were stuffed or wired at the end. They were laced, buckled, or buttoned, but the women's were rather shorter than the men's. In bad weather they were protected out of doors by the

*Poulaines*, which were wooden clogs with the same pointed toe pieces. These shoes were so extended that it actually became necessary in the interests of traffic congestion to pass laws limiting their length!

Men wore their hair fairly long, and, since the King's was a pale gold, dyes were used to secure



LADY BURTON, 1382 LITTLE CASTERTON

### HAIR

the same shade! Forked beards, with moustaches, were worn by older men. The brow was bound with a golden fillet decorated with flowers in enamel—a pretty custom. The women plucked their eyebrows, and shaved the backs of their necks in the manner of our own century. Their



hair was stuffed into the two side bags called the Reticulated head-dress. These now became stiff wire cages on either side of the face, joined together by a decorated band called a *Crespine*, which went along the top of the head in front as a forehead band.

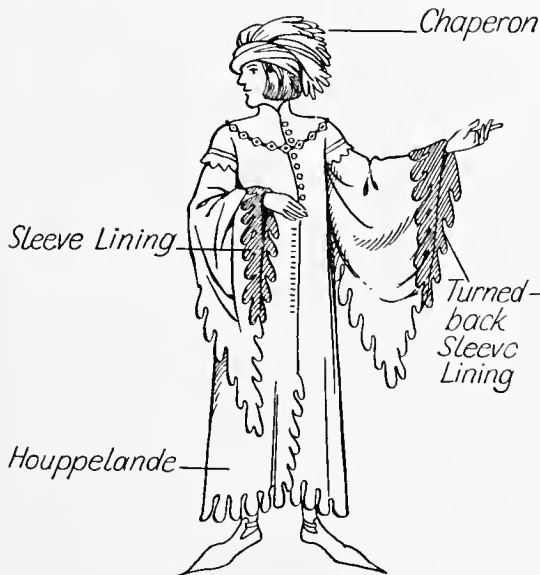
The *Dorelet* (women) was a caul of gold net worn all over the head with the hair tucked underneath it. It was of the "Juliet" type.

The *Nebule* (women) was a cylindrical roll of wire net, worn at first on top of the head, later on sides of the face as well. Its date is 1350-1380.

### HATS

The *Turban* (men) was what its name implies. It had a cloth crown with dagged ends, which overlapped the edge slightly.

The *Cap* (men) was round and brimless, but it was not a skull-cap. It stood up like a fez, and



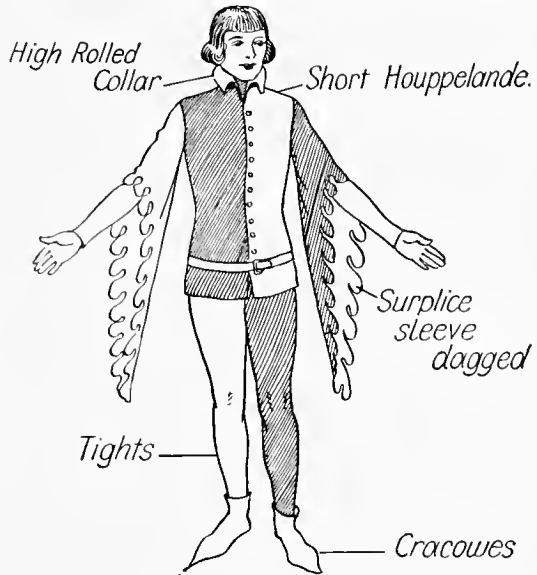
A DAGGED DRESS

was the favourite for young men, who decorated it with an ostrich feather, at the side.

The *Chaperon* (men) effected the greatest transformation from the original hood shape in which it was still made. The men decided to put their heads through the face opening, leaving the cape part, which used to cover the shoulders, to form a huge rosette at the side, it was secured in

place by twisting the now long liripipe round it. The liripipe was also used as a scarf round the neck. It was originally merely the peak of the hood.

The *Capuchon* (women) was the hood of yore and retained its old shape for women, being a



A GALLANT

cape, to which was attached a close head-covering, ending in a peak at the back of the head. The head cover was turned up over the head in bad weather, but otherwise it could be worn hanging at the back of the neck. In its original shape, it is still the correct style of academic hood, and is now so worn by many graduates, though the eighteenth-century wigs caused the head opening to widen considerably, with the result commonly seen to-day of a graduate wearing his hood half-way down his back instead of on his shoulders.

The *Fillet* (women) was a narrow strip of linen round the forehead and was worn with

The *Gorget* (women), which was a strip of linen passed round the throat several times and fastened to the hair above the ears, where it was also kept in place by the fillet.

There was plenty of variety in design, though the essentials were retained; materials were of the richest; velvets, silks, and fine linens, with sweeping trains, and the graceful floating veils of

gauze or thicker material. Jewellery was finely wrought, and colourings were vivid. The parti-coloured men's dress formed effective foils to the women's simpler two-colour schemes, whilst the firm, straight limbs of the young men in their tights contrasted well with the long, heavy folds and wide skirts of their women folk.

#### MEN (RICHARD II)

##### *Dress*

Cotehardie, jewelled.  
 Tabard—an heraldic surcoat.  
 Houppelande—long full sleeves, high bell-shaped collar, many buttons, very long or very short, side slashed.  
 Cloak—on right shoulder.  
 Gipciere—pouch on two straps from belt.  
 Baldrick—narrow belt, end falls in front.  
 Dagger, jewelled—on ribbon or chain.

##### *Legs*

Tights.

##### *Feet*

Crakowes—shoes, 6 in. long, stuffed or wired points.  
 Poulaines—wooden clogs with pointed toe.

##### *Hair*

Long, often dyed yellow. Moustache. Forked beard.  
 Fillet on brow in gold and enamel flowers.

##### *Hats*

Turban—cloth crown, dagged ends overlap edge.  
 Cap—round, brimless, with one ostrich feather.  
 Chaperon—hood with head put through face opening, the cape made into rosette, the liri-pipe knotted round as scarf or hat band.

##### *Jewels*

Huge rings, heavy chains, great elaboration.

#### WOMEN (RICHARD II)

##### *Dress*

Houppelande—as men.  
 Tippet—strips from elbow to knee, attached to an oversleeve.  
 Mantle—as before.  
 Cotehardie—long gored skirt, long tight sleeves, back laced, hip belt, low neck, parti-coloured.

Surcoat—fur edged and lined, sleeveless, wide armholes, cut away sides, waist length, parti-colour.

Gown—long, loose. Tight sleeves buttoned at wrist. V neck.

##### *Feet*

Crakowes—shoes less pointed than the men's. Laced, buckled, or buttoned.

##### *Hair*

Back of neck shaved, eyebrows plucked.  
 Reticulated—netted side bags and crespine (forehead band).  
 Dorelet—gold net caul.  
 Nebule—wire cylinder round face.

##### *Hats*

Capuchon—a hood as before.  
 Fillet and gorget—as before. For country folk.

##### *Jewels*

Gloves, rings, chains. Great profusion.

#### PEASANTS (Men)

##### *Dress*

Tunic—long, loose, belted. Dagged skirt and cape.

##### *Hat*

Capuchon.  
 Slouched hat. "Robin Hood" type.

##### *Legs*

Chausses, thick, bright coloured.

##### *Feet*

Black cloth or felt boots.

#### PEASANTS (Women)

##### *Dress*

Gown. Sometimes front laced and turned up over knees, long tight sleeves.  
 Underskirt—striped horizontally. Plain cotehardie.  
 Cotehardie—plain. Aprons.

##### *Hair*

No nebule or dorelet. Pigtail or two braids for girls.

##### *Hats*

Veil or wimple. Slouch hat.  
 Conical felt hat over wimple.

##### *Feet*

Coloured stockings. Leather shoes.

## HOW TO MAKE BEARDS, ETC., FROM CRÊPE-HAIR

By ALFRED HARTOP

*Perruquier and Lecturer to Amateur Societies*

**M**OUSTACHES may be represented by paint without the addition of hair, but painted moustaches are rarely satisfactory as their flatness is always obvious and their shape alters grotesquely with every movement of the lips. Painting should be confined to comedy characters or those that have a brief presence on the stage; that will be upstage, and, therefore, be seen only imperfectly and in emergency. Solid shapes of black or brown are, in any circumstance, to be avoided. To secure a reasonable semblance of hair, the desired shape is painted on the lip with black or brown grease paint, over which fine lines of lake, carmine, or reddish-brown are painted to suggest the direction of the growth. A few short streaks of high-light complete the effect, which is then powdered.

Along similar lines, natural moustaches are enlarged, altered in shape, or coloured to match the hair of the head when it has been made darker or lighter with make-up. Should a fair moustache have to be made darker, it is advisable to apply the dark shade of paint and then, to relieve the dull tone, to add a few lines of lake; also, if grey is required, the moustache should be darkened before applying white, otherwise the outline will be lost.

Difficulty arises when a natural moustache is inappropriate to the part to be played and some attempt has to be made to conceal it. No method of concealment is as efficient as to shave the moustache off, but as there is usually a reluctance to part with the adornment an alternative must be employed. A heavy and somewhat stiff type cannot be adequately hidden if there is any profile display, as the unnatural bulk of the lip betrays the attempt. A moustache of medium dimensions can be fixed down flat on the lip with a preparation known as "moustache fixer," a gummy compound made up into small sticks. It is somewhat difficult to handle, and should be used sparingly

to avoid subsequent trouble when removing it from the hair. Effectually to use it a small piece should be cut off the stick, heated until it becomes soft enough to apply to the moustache, which must be flattened out as much as possible with the aid of a wet orange stick. Sufficient pressure can be applied with the orange stick to make the hairs stick down and use of it will avoid gummy fingers. When the gum is thoroughly dry, cover the gummed hair with a liberal application of the foundation grease paint and powder. As a substitute for this preparation, wet soap, wig joining paste, or spirit gum may be used, with, perhaps, only a little less satisfactory result. For a small and fine moustache, the simplest, and often the most satisfactory, way is to flatten it, before powdering, by generous use of grease paint only. This way is the least liable to result in a stiff upper lip, which, needless to say, can be most uncomfortable when a player is singing or speaking.

Occasions also arise when a natural growth of short-trimmed side whiskers ("side-boards") is undesirable on the stage. These whiskers may be obliterated in a similar manner to that employed for moustaches, care being taken adequately to cover them with foundation colour and powder, and to create a definite new hair line by painting the hair above a little darker in order to emphasize the contrast.

On the other hand, if side whiskers are necessary, they may be effectively imitated by painting on with black or brown grease paint, relieved by a few lines of warm colour; or they can be made of crêpe-hair and gummed on in front of the ears extending down an inch or so from the hair. To secure a close-trimmed effect, the area to be covered should be cleaned free of grease, painted with spirit gum, which must then be dabbed over with chopped fibres of crêpe-hair. For heavier types, small pieces of hair cut to the required shape and fullness should be pressed on the

gummed area, but there must be no perceptible joining with the hair owing to the contrast of colour or difference of thickness. To conceal a joining, the hair pieces should be thinned along the back of the edge to be joined and allowed slightly to overwrap the natural hair. If necessary, the joining can be still better hidden by

stance, if they are brushed upward and supplemented with crêpe-hair that bends to the forehead, a mild, kindly expression is given to the features; on the contrary, if they are brushed downward, with hair added to point in the direction of the eyes, the result suggests ferocity. In extreme cases, it may be necessary partially or entirely to conceal the natural eyebrows before replacing them with false ones. This is done by painting out with foundation colour or by first fixing them down with soap or "moustache fixer" before applying the grease paint and powder.

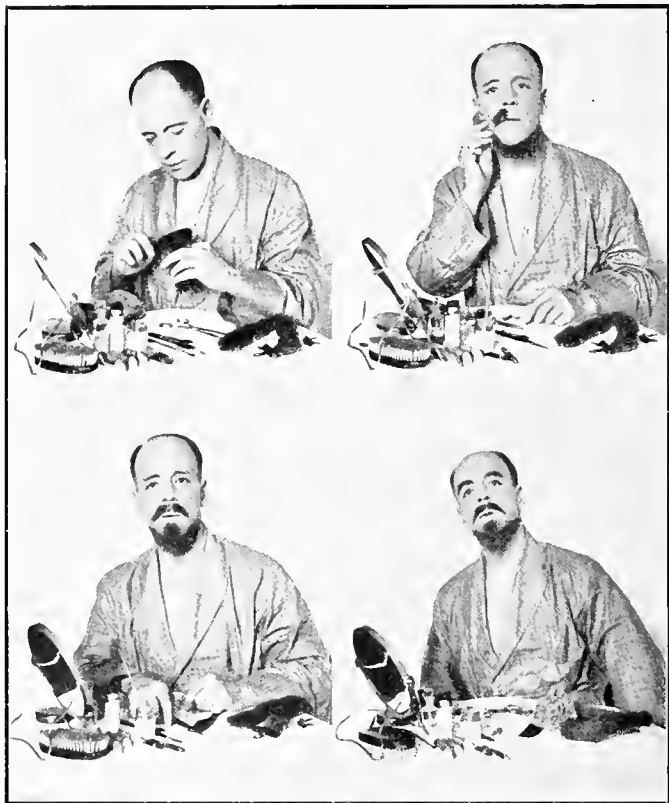
Whenever small crêpe-hair pieces are required for moustache, side whiskers, or eyebrows, it is an excellent plan to sketch on paper the exact shape in mind and then to select portions from a bulk of prepared hair that have the necessary straight, wavy, or pointed parts to execute the desired style to the best advantage. It is sometimes an advantage, when finally shaping such pieces, to trim them to the exact size before fixing them on the face, so that twin-pieces can more easily be judged to be exactly alike. In other cases, it is better to fix pieces larger than are actually required, the final shape being effected, after fixing, by trimming with sharp scissors.

#### BEARDS

The beard is not a mere mass of hair. It is characteristic of the individual and of nationality. Something excessive or ideal may be represented by a beard. It adds to the dignity and character of years. In fact, a beard

may be made, with taste and knowledge, the most characteristic part of a make-up.

The best guidance in the selection of a style to convey any character impression is obtained by observation of living models or by reference to pictorial forms. It should be noted, however, that in a full, natural beard, the hair has a peculiarity that depends on the place from which it grows. The hair of the upper lip is more profuse, and, even in the oldest man, is of a darker hue. Again, the



1. PREPARING THE BEARD PIECES
2. FIXING THE UNDER-CHIN PIECE
3. THE FRONT-CHIN PIECE IN POSITION
4. AFTER TRIMMING

adding touches of suitable colour so that the natural hair and the artificial merge into each other.

Where the need for extra heavy, shaggy, or unkempt eyebrows, has to be met, crêpe-hair can be used to supplement the natural eyebrows. These should, however, be made to suggest the required direction of the growth by brushing them, and the crêpe-hair should be gummed on with the fibres running in the same direction. For in-

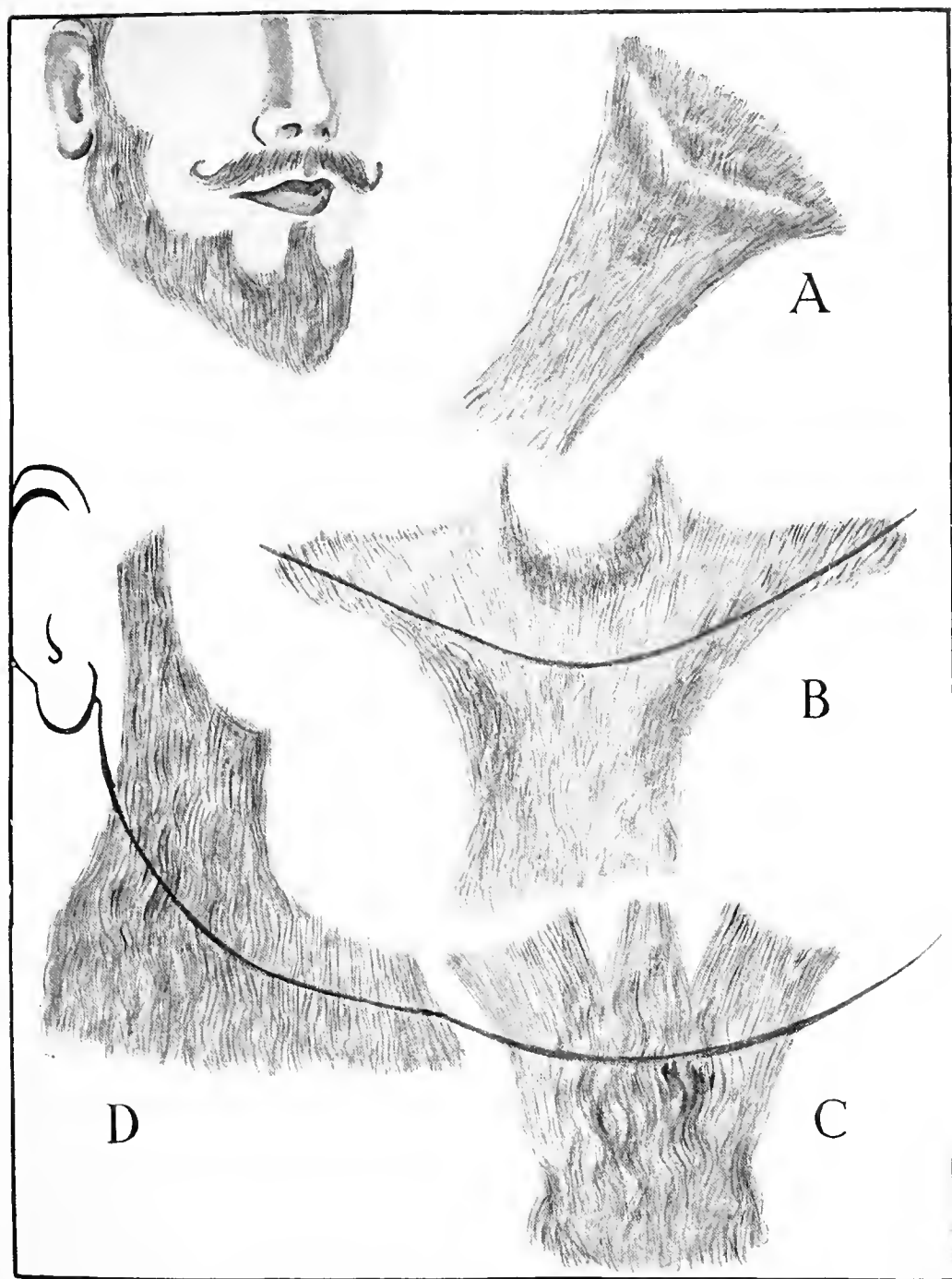


FIG. 16. MOUNTING A THREE OR FOUR PIECE BEARD

hair on the sides of the face grows to a greater length than that which grows from the chin, though this is more especially the character of old age.

When mounting a false beard upon the face, the manner of manipulating prepared crêpe-hair is to some extent governed by the style of beard that is required, and there is ample scope for adaptable artistry. There can be no one system of rules to work by; any method that facilitates the performance and achieves the desired result may be employed.

Fig. 16 provides an example of a typical trimmed beard and illustrates the necessary hair pieces and a well-proved method of mounting direct to the face. Refer to the example (Fig. 16). Assume that the bearded face has to be copied, and examine the details of the beard-line (the outline is over-emphasized to make its position more clear). Note how the beard joins the lower lip at its centre, then curves downward, rising again almost to the corners of the mouth. It then curves down and outward along the cheek, turns upward, and finally ascends in front of the ear to the temple. Begin with about four inches of prepared hair, of full thickness, teased out loosely. At one end open out the hair to form a cup, as shown at *A*. Fit this opening over the chin and pull the hair into position under the lower lip.

If this method of a single centre piece fails to provide the necessary fullness, the alternative method of using two pieces, as shown at *B* and *C*, can be adopted. The beard will then consist of four pieces. Piece *B* is fixed with gum under the chin as indicated by the line, the portion above the line being bent backward on to the throat. Piece *C* is then placed into position on the chin,

with its top centre close to the lower lip and its sides extended along the jaw. The two side pieces *D* are added, leaving a space in front of the ears without hair. Join the pieces neatly, and trim to the correct length and shape, care being taken to avoid any bare patches of skin.

Further reference to the four photographs should prove instructive and help to clear up any doubtful points that may arise in actual practice. Note how the short length of prepared crêpe-hair is teased to approximate shape and size with the aid of a comb, and how the under-chin piece (*B*) has been placed in position and is being pressed on to the gummed surface with a damp sponge. At the same stage, one-half of the moustache has been roughly mounted. In No. 3 the moustache is seen completed and the front-chin piece (*C*) mounted in position before the final trimming. Finally, the combined result of beard, moustache, and eyebrows, reinforced with small pieces of crêpe-hair, is shown.

Beards should always be mounted after the grease paint and powder make-up has been definitely completed, although some margin of the beard area may be left untouched with grease. But it should be considered a rule that wherever spirit gum has to be applied the skin should be thoroughly cleaned free of paint; otherwise, the mounting will not be a success. When the hair selected is of a dark colour and the unpainted part of the face is naturally pale, it is advisable to darken the skin with a thin wash of either water-cosmetic or water-colour in order that the whiteness beneath the mounted beard will not shine through by reflecting light from the "foots." Unlike grease, water-colour does not retard the sticking properties of spirit gum.

## LIGHTING APPARATUS

By C. HAROLD RIDGE, A.R.S.M., D.I.C., and F. S. ALDRED, A.M.Inst.C.E.  
*Consulting Engineers*

THE shadows thrown by any objects lighted by footlights and battens are multiple; they are not of great density, and are easily smoothed out by the other lighting instruments that are used in conjunction with them. From a flood lantern, too, the shadows will be sharper and single instead of multiple, but they will still be soft-edged owing to the size of the unit and the breaking up of the light by the large reflector. The moment the light rays are refracted through a lens, as in the focus lantern, and become, even approximately, unidirectional, hard sharp shadows are produced that it is almost impossible to eliminate by the use of other lighting instruments on the stage. Sometimes these shadows do not matter; they may even be a help, but in most cases the focus lantern must be masked.

First of all, the "phantom" beam can be got rid of by fitting on the front of the lantern a metal cylinder or hood, fixing it into the grooves used for the colour mediums. This hood should be of about one inch greater diameter than the lens, and about 4 in. long. If it is made in two parts, one sliding on the other, the hood can be extended to about 7 in., thus allowing for a sharp, narrow beam, comparable with that from an arc focus lantern or a spread beam up to about  $17^{\circ}$ . If a greater spread than this is required, the hood must be removed or made in the form of a conical funnel. In most positions that are occupied by focus lanterns there will not, of course, be room for these large hoods, but they do offer great advantages over shorter ones because if grooves similar to those on the lantern are provided at the front end of the hood masks can be slipped into them, and the results are far better and sharper than when the masks are placed nearer to the lens. All hoods must be painted a matt black inside to prevent reflection. Fig. 30 shows diagrammatically the optical system of the focus lantern, neglecting the "phantom" beams.

It will be seen at once that the efficiency of

these lanterns is low; a figure of 10 per cent to 15 per cent may be taken as an indication of the total light flux usefully employed in the emergent

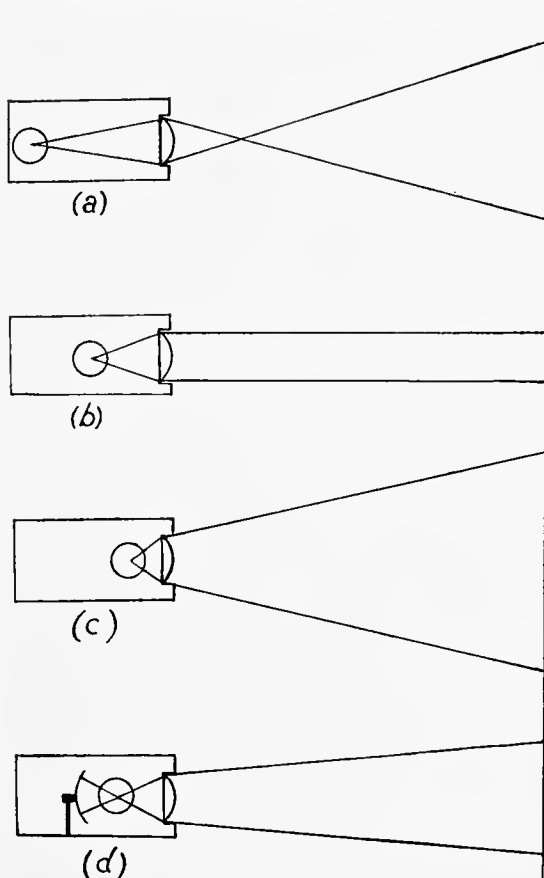


FIG. 30

beam. In Fig. 30 (d) will be seen a spherical mirror placed behind the lamp. This can theoretically double the efficiency of the lantern if the filament is at the centre of curvature of the mirror. In practice about 70 per cent increase in the foot-candle power of the beam is obtained.

The usual practice in theatres is to omit this mirror in spot lanterns where size has to be kept

down, as the heat to which the mirror would be subjected would be so great that few of them would stand subjection to it for long periods. All the silvered glass mirrors tested by the authors have deteriorated badly in a short time, varying from three to fifty hours. In larger lanterns, for example 3000 watt lamps, which are not made for use in cramped positions and which are, therefore, of ample size and well ventilated, silvered glass "Mangin" mirrors last almost indefinitely, as they can be made with a greater radius of curvature and placed farther away from the lamp. In the lantern illustrated in Fig. 27 the mirror is made of a metal spinning plated with chromium and this is stated to wear very well. In this make of lantern there is a special lamp holder which engages a special screw cap on the lamp to ensure that the filament is always at the correct position in regard to the mirror. If this is not provided, the mirror has to be carefully set by hand, otherwise two distinct beams of light emerge. Apart from increased efficiency, the use of a spherical mirror gives a much more even patch of light where the beam strikes the stage.

Now that alternating current is becoming the standard supply throughout the country, there are greater opportunities of improving both the optical properties and the efficiency of spot lanterns by using low voltage lamps. These lamps, because of the thick filament wire used, and the possibility, therefore, of compact mounting, give a source of light that more nearly approaches a point than the ordinary bunched filament projector lamps. The lamps used are usually the 30 volt 20 ampere,

or 30 volt 30 ampere. A transformer is used on an A.C. supply, mounted near the lamp so that only short leads are required from the low tension side for the heavier current. The high tension side of the transformer is connected by the usual wiring to the stage switchboard, through a dimmer if desired. Although the operation is exactly the same whether a high or low voltage lamp is used, great care must be taken in the design and manufacture of the transformers to ensure absence of noise, and the danger of "surging" when switching on and off must not be overlooked.

With direct current such an arrangement is impracticable, as it would be difficult to wind or accommodate 30 ampere dimmers on a switchboard, and even if dimming were not required the waste of energy in a resistance used to reduce the voltage would not be justified.

#### BEAM SPREAD ANGLES

Tests were made by the authors with a standard "spotlight" focus lantern and an Osram, 1000 watt, 200 volt, round bulb projector lamp with bunched filament, class B. The object of the test was to ascertain the beam angles resulting from different positions of the lamp relative to the lens. Six, 8 and 10 in. focus commercial theatre type plano-convex lenses of 6 in. diameter were used, and comparative angles obtained from each lens with the lamp in different positions, measured from the centre of the filament to the flat or inside side of the lens.

The lamp positions producing parallel beams

ANGLE OF BEAM IN DEGREES

Lamp Position	6 in. Focus Lens	8 in. Focus Lens	10 in. Focus Lens
10 in.			
9 in.		26 crossed beam	14 crossed beam approximately parallel beam
8 in.		20 " "	4
7 in.		approximately parallel beam	10
6 in.		5	15
5 in.	approximately parallel beam	13	24
4 in.	6	29	31
3 in.	17	36	43
2½ in.	24	43	52



in each case do not coincide with the focal length of the different lenses, the reason being, of course, that as the focal length of a lens is measured from the approximate centre of the lens, half the thickness of the respective lenses should be added to the measurements in the first column at the positions in question. It will then be seen that, as one would expect, the parallel beam is produced when the centre of the filament is at a distance from the lens centre equal to its focal length. The thicknesses of the lenses used were 2 in.,  $1\frac{1}{8}$  in., and  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in. for the 6, 8, and 10 in. lenses respectively. At the parallel beam positions a perfect image of the lamp filament was projected on the screen.

With the lamp beyond the parallel beam position, crossed beams resulted in the case of the 8 in. and 10 in. lenses, as would be expected; with the 6 in. lens the beam was diffused owing to internal reflection in the lens itself and to spherical aberration.

Had a tubular type lamp, class A, been used, its smaller diameter would have allowed its filament to approach nearer to the lens with a consequent larger beam angle.

It will be noticed that a greater travel of lamp is required as the focal length of the lens increases. Lanterns should be designed to allow the lamp filament to be placed at the focus of the longest focus lens likely to be used at any time. In most theatres no attempt is made to use a parallel beam when employing a gas-filled lamp, a beam spread of about  $6^\circ$  being the limit because of the filament image that is formed at narrower angles. In the authors' opinion, this objection is often invalid unless the image is very sharp indeed, as the other stage lights generally in use at the same time will prevent the varying intensity of different parts of the beam from being noticed. Some producers deliberately use filament images to give a greater "texture" to their lighting. For a sharp, even, parallel beam, or "pin-spotting" as it is called, a metal cone is often fitted to the front of a focus lantern carrying an objective lens. This gets over any difficulty of filament image, but the loss of light makes it a doubtful advantage.

#### INTENSITY OF LIGHT BEAMS

The Inverse Square Law applies to focus lanterns, provided that the position of the lamp rela-

tive to the lens is not changed when the lantern is moved towards or away from the object to be illuminated. In practice, of course, the beam angle would be altered to illuminate the same area, whatever distance the lantern might be away from it. The following table, therefore, will be of value as it shows the intensities in foot-candles that may be expected from a standard 1000 watt focus lantern at various distances, but always set to give a 6 ft. diameter circle of light at the point at which the readings are taken.

1,000 Watt "Spotlight"—Diameter of Beam, 6 ft.

Distance of Object	Foot Candles
10 ft.	53
15 ft.	40
20 ft.	33
25 ft.	28
30 ft.	23
35 ft.	22
40 ft.	21

A glance is sufficient to show that although, as expected, the intensity of the light decreases as the distance increases, it is fortunately at a far slower rate than is indicated by the Inverse Square Law, which would give a figure of about 3.3 foot-candles at 40 feet instead of 21. In America 8 in., and even 10 in., diameter lenses are commonly used. These are more efficient, as they transmit a greater percentage of the total light flux than those of smaller diameter, owing to the greater angle subtended by the larger lens. Their greater size has hitherto discouraged their use in this country, but they are becoming more popular, and the "Major" spotlight on Fig. 27 has an 8 in. diameter lens.

So much emphasis has been laid upon the low efficiency of the standard theatre models of spotlights that it will be well to describe a new design of lantern that is marketed under the name of "Stelmar," and is obtainable from the Strand Electric Co. This lantern can use an arc or a gas-filled lamp as the source of light, and by the use of ellipsoidal reflectors it gathers up most of the rays that are normally absorbed by the lantern housing. The optical system is represented diagrammatically in Fig. 31. First of all, a spherical mirror is used behind the source. In front of the source, and as close to it as possible, is the outer ellipsoidal reflector. This reflector gathers a wide

angle zone of light from the source, and produces a cone of light converging on the conjugate focus of the ellipse. To reduce the size that would otherwise be required for the outer reflector and to limit the frontal beam angle, there is another

lamp it is made with the surface "stepped" so that any filament image may be broken up, thus preventing unevenness in the final emergent beam focused on the stage. It should be appreciated that with the Stelmar system little light

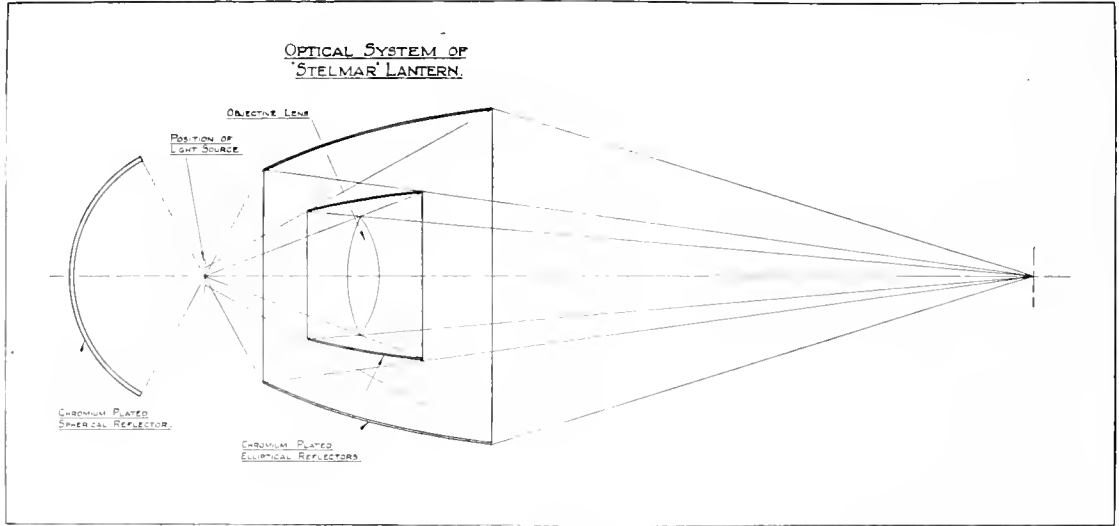


FIG. 31

inner ellipsoidal reflector producing a second cone of light converging on the same point as before. Suspended in the centre of the frontal reflectors is a small lens producing yet a third cone of light, which again comes to a focus at the same point. In the case of the arc or low voltage gas-filled lamp, the centre lens can be of the ordinary bi-convex type, but with the high voltage gas-filled

from the source is wasted, and as the lamp itself, in the case of the gas-filled variety, must be held in position and ventilated, this arrangement in any case prevents any reflector extending underneath or over the top. The appreciable extension of the present reflector would increase the size and cost out of proportion to the small additional quantity of light gathered.

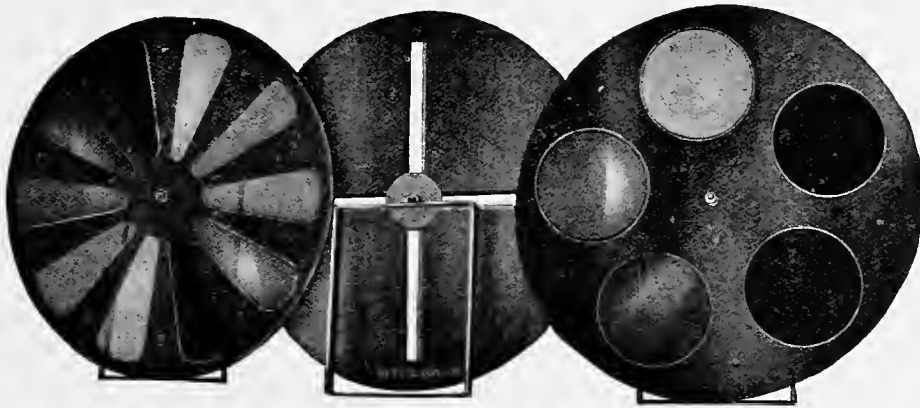
## THE EFFECTS LANTERN

By A. E. PETERSON

*Founder, Sunday Night Adventurers ; Secretary, Kingston Marionette Players, etc.*

MANY fine visual effects may be obtained by using the magic lantern, sciopticon, or effects lantern, and wonderful results can be produced by means of coloured lights. With a patented lighting system it is possible to set a scene showing summer in its full glory and then by switching on a different set of lights to transform

fitted with a special snow screen. This is a shallow box having at each end a small roller fitted with a handle for turning. Between the rollers is a long narrow band of black silk wide enough effectively to close the light aperture. The black silk is generously perforated with a sharp needle, leaving intact at each end a portion about five or six inches



RAINBOW, FLICKER, AND COLOUR WHEELS

the scene to winter. An actor in evening dress can be changed instantaneously from a normal human being to a grinning negro, in a white suit that may be faced with brilliant colours or decorated with jazz designs, and it is possible to change a row of beautiful chorus girls into a nightmare of grinning skeletons by the same means. Such effects as these are usually introduced into the revue type of entertainment for the sake of their novelty, and although expensive to arrange are often welcomed by a harassed producer at his wit's end in the search for original variety.

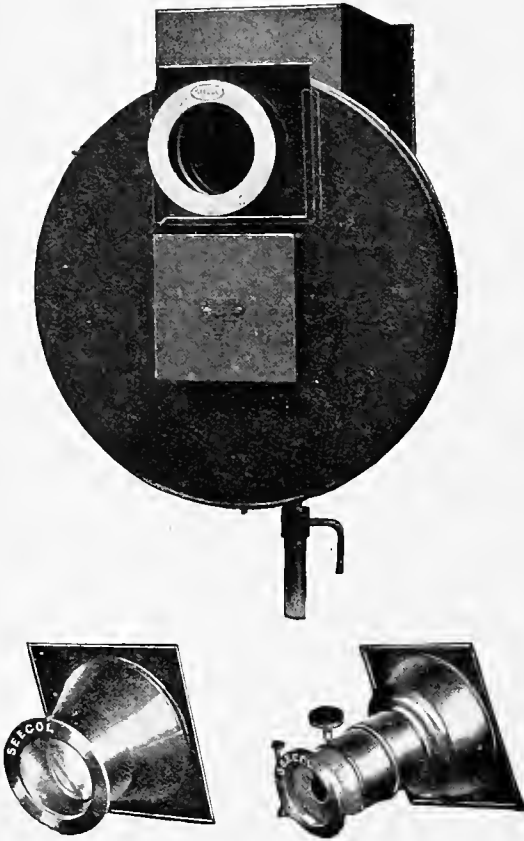
The average amateur producer is usually a genius at improvisation and remarkable effects have been obtained by using a home-made flood light and a magic lantern with suitable accessories. If it is necessary to see snow falling and there is no snow trough or cradle provided, it may be suggested by means of a magic lantern

long. The black silk should be wound on to the bottom roller, and the unpierced portion of it should be fixed so that when the light is turned on no light escapes. When in position, the black silk takes the place of the ordinary lantern slide and when the upper roller is turned the pierced portion of the silk passing behind the objective lens allows the light to pass through the silk on to the backcloth where the small circles of light slowly drifting downwards provide a good impression of falling snow.

The effect of flames or fires is supplied by a painted slide consisting of a circular piece of glass mounted in a brass frame, which turns by means of a rack and pinion; and twinkling stars can be similarly suggested. For rainbows the apparatus is somewhat more complicated. The slide is made of tin or other metal in which a semi-circular or bow-shaped slit about a sixteenth of an inch wide

has been cut. This is placed in the slide holder, and immediately in front of the objective are fixed glass prisms in such a manner that the light piercing the curved slit in the tin slide passes through them. The reflected image shows all the colours of the rainbow. Owing to refraction, however, the rainbow may appear anywhere but

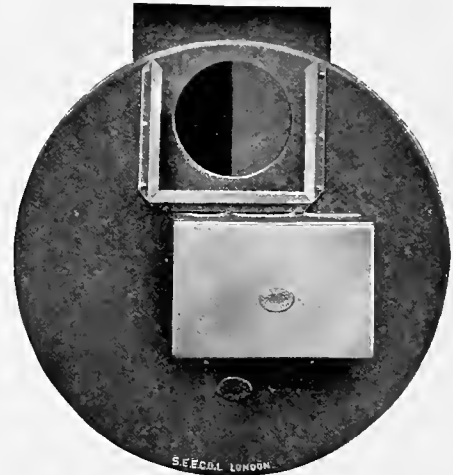
dangling in the wind may be suggested by fixing tin or cardboard shapes in the slide holder. The lantern should be securely fixed to prevent any accidental jarring that would spoil the effect. Silhouettes of heads or grotesque figures may be thrown on to walls or windows by similar means. If it is desired to throw the distorted shadow of a



OPTICAL STAGE EFFECTS LANTERNS

where it is required, and it may be necessary to tilt the lantern until the rainbow moves from the floor or the wall to the correct position. The rainbow may be made to appear and disappear by turning the light on and off, or a second tin slide may be placed in front of the prepared slide.

The hot white glare of southern sunlight may be intensified by throwing long black shadows across the stage. The sharp pointed gables of houses, trees, and signposts, or even the threatening arm of a gibbet with its menacing noose



AUTOMATIC COLOUR WHEEL

dancer or some other person on to the backcloth, this may be done by placing a spotlight in the wings or by concealing it in the footlight trough. The light when required is operated by a switch placed in such a position that the operator has the dancer and his shadow in full view all the time. This is simply a reversal of the old shadow show where one saw on an illuminated white screen the black shadow of a performer that seemed to grow larger and larger as he walked away from the screen towards the light, and finally appeared to jump into the auditorium as he leaped over the lime light placed well upstage at stage level. The mysterious shadow of a stork carrying a baby in a bundle that it dropped down a chimney was arranged by having a cardboard stork hung at a distance from the screen and a man behind it waving a lighted lamp. The shadow could be multiplied by placing additional men with lights, each light casting a separate shadow, which grew or diminished as the men moved about.

A magic lantern of the dissolving view type can be used to show in a sequence of pictures such

effects as the thoughts passing through the mind of a man in a condemned cell, the hallucinations of a disordered mind, the visions of a dreamer, or ghostly visitors who appear and disappear at will.

An interesting variation of the snow screen effect is the colour screen, but instead of a magic

lamphouse, well ventilated and lined with asbestos, and fitted with a four and a half or five inch condenser. The light source is an arc lamp of 20-40 ampere capacity, the other essential being the objective or optical lens, the focus of which will depend on the length of the throw and the area to be covered. The effect itself depends on



SCINTILLATING MIRROR BALL



EFFECTS LANTERN

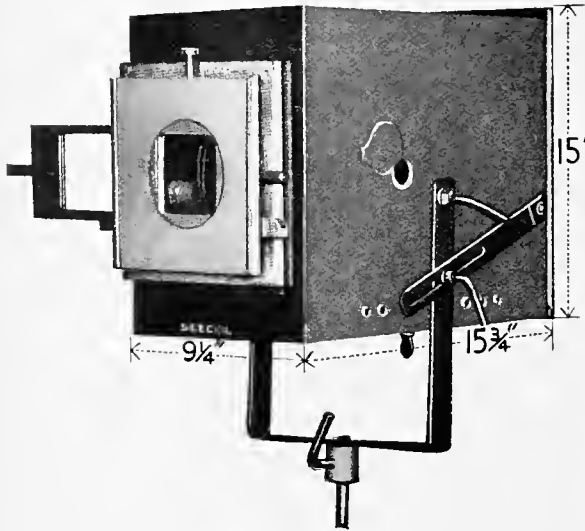
lantern a floodlight is used. The coloured silk band is worked in a similar manner, the colours being determined by the particular atmosphere to be suggested. "Toned" strips of coloured silk with long "V" shaped joins, will cause the colour of the light to change almost imperceptibly as the joined portions slowly pass across the light.

The sciopticon is an improvement on the magic lantern. The advance in scientific research has enabled the "effects" lantern to be utilized to simulate Nature to an extraordinary degree. The lantern itself usually consists of a planished steel

the required result, but in many cases it consists of a circular mica disc on which has been hand-painted clouds, rain, snow, waterfalls, rippling water, waves, fires, and other natural phenomena. Driven by either clockwork or a small electric motor, it rotates between the condenser and the objective lens. In the case of a rough sea, a vertical movement may be required. This is secured by a series of slides operated by eccentrics.

In some theatres where "effects" are projected from an operating box and the length of the throw is considerable, the light source often

reaches a capacity of 80-100 amperes, and here great care must be taken so that the heat does not damage the mica disc or effect slide. In such circumstances, movement of the effect should be started before the arc is struck, and when the lantern is finished with, the arc should be switched off and the lantern door opened to admit air before



EFFECTS LANTERN

the effect disc is stopped, otherwise the slide may be blistered by residual heat.

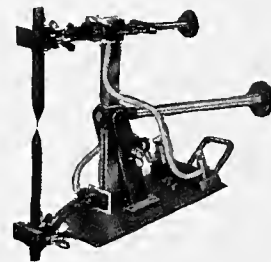
An effects lantern of this description costs with one effect about £30. Additional effects to be used on the same lantern cost from £10 each, according to the detail that is required in the hand-painting, which must be done by a skilled artist who is gifted with the essential imagination to depict phenomena of Nature as stage spectacles. Each effect is complete with its own clockwork motor. The illustrations, supplied by the Strand Electric and Engineering Co., Ltd., of London, show the types of lantern described.

Many grades of effects lanterns are manufactured. Prices vary according to the quality. The needs of small societies that produce a play once a year, for perhaps three performances only, are recognized, and it is possible to hire a first-class effects lantern. The usual hiring charge is about a guinea and a half a week for a complete

single effect outfit, inclusive of the necessary resistance and plugging fuseboard, telescopic standard, etc. If additional effects are required for the same lantern, it is usual to charge a sum about half that figure. It is always advisable to deal with a firm of repute when hiring effects. Many firms keep a staff of experts who are willing to advise, free of charge, on any lighting effect that is required.

In all cases when an effects lantern is used, care should be taken to place it in such a position that whilst it can be easily and quickly moved it can also be firmly fixed so that it cannot be accidentally moved or knocked over during a performance. The free movement of the players making their entrances and exits should not be overlooked, and no one should pass across the front of the lantern when it is in action.

The use of the moving picture film as scenery and the "talkie" as an aid to stage effects has already been accepted by the theatre, and such spectacles as waves breaking on a rocky coast, street life, or open country fleeting past the window of a train supposed to be in motion, accompanied by "sound," are common. When Chlumberg's play *Miracle at Verdun* was produced in New York there were eight film interludes, and at one stage three films as well as a scene from the play were being shown simultaneously, the same actors appearing in the film



episodes as on the stage. Whether this type of "cineplay" will revolutionize the technique of playwriting or die a natural death can be left to the future to decide, but in the meantime it will be wise to accept and use any medium that offers interesting possibilities in the production of stage effects.

## DRESSING A MUSICAL PLAY

By DUMAYNE WARNE

Author (with Phil Forsyth) of "The House," "The Ultimate Revue," "Second Thoughts," etc.

FROM the point of view of costumes, which, incidentally, by professionals are always known as wardrobe, almost all musical plays fall into two classes: (1) Costume, and (2) Straight, or Modern Dress. And whereas some societies provide all the clothes, whatever the nature of the play, others expect the members of the company to provide their own, unless the work in hand is a period or other piece, requiring garments that nobody could reasonably be expected to possess in the ordinary way.

This applies more especially to the principals. Costumes for the chorus will almost certainly have to be found by the management of the society. It cannot be expected that eight young men will all have lounge suits of exactly the same colour and cut. In fact, even their dress clothes may vary so much as to render them unsuitable for use on the stage. Grey flannel suits, which one would think should be serviceable, actually vary enormously in shade, and this is exaggerated by artificial lighting. The same sort of thing applies to the girls, although occasionally it is desirable that they should wear costumes of the same kind but different as to colour and detail. For example, in the opening scene in the musical comedy *The Girl Friend* the chorus girls first appear in travelling suits, and provided that these do not actually clash in colour or vary too widely in the texture of the material of which they are made, it is definitely preferable that they should not all be alike. Similarly, in *Derby Day*, provided that the race-goers suggest a sufficiently wide range in the social scale, they may wear almost anything; except the special characters—costers in "Pearlies," bookmakers, etc.

In short, apart from crowd scenes, of which both the above two are really examples, although there is singing and dancing work, the costumes for the chorus must be provided by the society.

There are two ways in which this may be done. Either they may be hired from a theatrical costumier, or they may be made by members of

the society, or by anyone else who can be persuaded to undertake the work. And for differing purposes each of these will be found more convenient from time to time, and occasionally it will be necessary to combine the two. For example, a party of ladies could not make eight lounge suits for the chorus men that would be as suitable from the point of view of price or appearance as those that could be hired from a firm of theatrical costumiers. On the other hand, the ladies might very likely be able to make a number of evening dresses for the chorus girls, of material that would look quite satisfactory from the auditorium, at much the same price as that at which they could be hired, and, owing to the fact that they would be made especially for the production, they might be more up to date and, therefore, more generally suitable than borrowed ones.

On the subject of the cost of hiring costumes, for the benefit of those who have no experience at all, it may be given as a rough rule of thumb that this works out at about half a guinea each, provided that there are a reasonable number of them and that they have not to be sent an enormously long distance. For a small number it might be almost double that figure.

It may be mentioned, in passing, that for operatic societies it is much more usual to hire costumes than to make them, chiefly on account of the numbers involved.

Whichever course is adopted, a wardrobe mistress should be appointed. If the costumes are hired, the duties, to a suitable person, will be quite light. Duties are always heavy when they fall to someone who is either unenthusiastic or unsuitable to carry them out, and the wardrobe mistress of an amateur operatic society is very much one of the silent workers, who must toil with little hope of praise, but with the certainty of having to endure a good deal of grumbling.

Among the duties of this member of the

production staff for a performance in which the costumes are to be hired, are the following—

(a) To take the measurements of the company, enter them on the proper form, and send them to the costumiers. A wise course is to keep a loose-leaf book containing the measurement forms of all the active members of the society. New ones may be slipped into alphabetical order and old ones removed as desired, and, when a production takes place, the contractor's own form may be filled in with little trouble and without the necessity for remeasuring every member of the cast.

(b) To take charge of the costumes on their arrival at the theatre, and to see that they are handed out to the proper people.

(c) To check all the costumes delivered, and to communicate at once with the providers in the event of any omissions.

(d) To see that there are no glaring historical or other inaccuracies such as are likely to be observed by the audience, and therefore distract their attention.

(e) To help the company into their clothes and generally to assist them to wear everything properly. Also to do what she can to see that members of the company are not unnecessarily careless or destructive with borrowed property.

The wardrobe mistress has little leisure to concern herself about the treatment of the hired costumes; nevertheless, she can often, by a judicious word here and there, save her committee a good deal of expense in repairs to and replacements of hired clothes.

(f) Finally, at the end of the production, to supervise the packing and return of the costumes, so that there may be no argument afterwards with the owners that certain articles have not been sent back.

For productions in which the costumes are the property of those who are to wear them (or their friends), the duties of the wardrobe mistress are much lighter, but she should still be appointed, to help members in cases of difficulty and to carry out any other work which belongs to this department and which requires to be done.

The duty of the wardrobe mistress in the society that makes its own costumes is different. In fact, from being an individual who has only to check off lists of clothes, she becomes the head of

a most important department, and an amount of technical skill and imagination quite out of the ordinary is an essential part of her equipment. She is, on the other hand, quite likely to have these (within the limits of the standard of the company), as no society would embark on making costumes for a production, which is an enormous undertaking, when they can be hired so simply and at, comparatively, small cost, unless it had in its ranks a member outstandingly suitable to take charge of the work. The talents of such a person would tend to her achieving prominence among her colleagues, whether she sought it or not.

It is not required to labour the point, one imagines, that there is no reason for the head of the wardrobe to be a woman, but it adds greatly to the ease of writing to use one form of reference throughout. Incidentally, I have never encountered a male wardrobe-chief, although I know of male dress designers.

#### THE HISTORY OF COSTUME

Another subject on which a costume designer requires to be well informed is the history of costume.

It is not generally known that experts in the history of costume have now reached a point at which they can describe, with confidence, the changes of fashion in clothes and the manner of wearing them, from month to month, for hundreds of years back. Characters are often dressed by ordinary firms of theatrical costumiers in garments that would surprise our ancestors as much as would the sight of a man attired in a dinner suit, brown boots, a bowler hat, bicycle clips, and a red necktie, offend us. But since most of us do not know where the theatrical costumier is wrong and as our ancestors are not here to laugh at us, we are prepared to accept the most ridiculous anachronisms with perfect equanimity, provided that the historical atmosphere of the play is kept up.

This is a subject with which the head of a theatrical dress designing department needs to be very much at home. In the ordinary way the resources at the disposal of the kind of person with whom we are now dealing are not comparable with those of the professional hirer of stage costumes. It, therefore, behoves her to be familiar with what is really necessary to suggest



a period dress to an audience, so that, even if they know where it is wrong, they will accept the variation as a convention, because it fits in, harmoniously, with the rest of the production scheme.

At this point, a digression may be allowed on a subject that has been touched on before, namely, that one of the duties of the wardrobe mistress is to see that the company wear their dresses properly. At no time is it more important than when the costume is a period one which, perhaps for financial reasons, is rather more suggestive of a certain date than actually belonging to it. Shoes, with heels of the correct height, which assist the wearer to walk suitably, a correctly carried walking stick, muff, or other hand property, will often permit a costume to pass muster, provided that the cut is reasonably accurate, even if the material, or some other detail, is years out of period.

#### MARKED CHANGES

During the past century or so, at least four marked changes in clothes and the manner of wearing them have taken place, and a costume from any one of them, worn by an actress who used the manners of any other, would look ridiculous; ridiculous, not only to a contemporary of the dress, if there were one alive to see it, but ridiculous also to us who know nothing of the technicalities of the matter, but who merely go to the theatre sometimes, or who look at our grandmother's photograph album and listen to her comments on our sisters.

It seems clear that changes in clothes are usually accompanied by changes in other things, and a knowledge of the nature of those changes is essential to a wardrobe mistress who desires to see her creations looking correct on the stage, although they may not be accurate in the minor details.

Perhaps it should be remarked that the wardrobe mistress should use the greatest tact and discretion in telling any members of the company how they should comport themselves on the stage, as this is really the producer's province, and he may well be jealous of any interference. If it is offered in the proper manner, however, he may be grateful for some help.

Reverting to the original subject, namely, the knowledge required by the head of a theatrical dressmaking department, it may be said briefly

that she should be acquainted with everything that will help her to suggest a period costume accurately, in order to avoid putting unnecessary strain on her department.

If anything is required by the producer which is completely beyond the limits of her staff, she should realize it immediately and make a report to that effect without delay.

This article is not a lecture on the technicalities of making period costumes, but rather a list of suggestions for an amateur operatic society that is thinking of starting to make its own wardrobe, so it should suffice to say that the mere fact that period clothes are required does not rule the scheme out as impossible at once unless armour or something of the sort is essential, as a really efficient wardrobe mistress, who knows her history, can achieve wonders in the way of suggesting historical accuracy and atmosphere, with materials that are, relatively, quite ordinary and inexpensive.

The functions of a designer of stage costumes are really distinct from those of a wardrobe mistress, but for the purpose in hand no useful end is served by separating them, as a design is useless if it cannot be carried out for reasons of expense or mechanical difficulties, and the wardrobe mistress is the only person who knows the limits of her department's capabilities.

#### TWO POLICIES

There are two entirely different types of policy to be taken into account when it comes to the question of expense. The first is to buy all the materials of the best possible quality that the exchequer can afford, and then to use them over and over again, carefully unpicking old garments where necessary and re-making them as something else, and preserving those that may come in again so that they will not get moth-eaten or crumpled. The second is to buy the cheapest materials that will serve the purpose, remembering the importance of the effect of lighting on all fabrics, and practically to disregard them at the end of each production. Some of them may come in useful again in any case.

Which of the two it is better for a society to adopt is entirely a matter for the committee to decide. There may be no facilities for the storage of costumes, however well they are made. Perhaps the society does not see a sufficiently long

life for itself to make it worth while to amass property that will be of value only in a problematical future. There may, on the other hand, be some prospect of the formation of a sort of repertory company for which a supply of costumes would be invaluable.

The scheme of dressing for a professional production is worked out by a designer, under the direction of the producer. For our purpose this means that the producer will tell the wardrobe mistress what he wants, and she will do her best to supply it. It will behove him, therefore, to do his best to seem reasonable in his requirements and to indicate them politely. For the lady in charge of the dressmaking for a production is a powerful person and may do much to make or mar a show. But she has certain concessions to ask of the producer, and it makes for the smooth running of rehearsals if she makes her demands at reasonable times and places. Her most important requirement is for the company to attend at the workrooms for measurements and fittings, and she should see to it that she does not call for any of the company at such times and in such numbers as to interfere with the usefulness of the rehearsals held by the producer.

The designs of the costumes having been agreed, it is the duty of the wardrobe mistress to do everything else to see that they are ready by the time of the dress rehearsal or, preferably, slightly before. She must make patterns, secure staff (the chorus usually like to help if they have time), arrange about buying materials, borrow or hire a sewing machine, etc.

She may also have to make arrangements to provide refreshments to her helpers while they are at work. While dealing with small points, it may be worth while to suggest that no member of the company should ever be allowed to sew her own dress, or it will probably be discovered that a set of chorus dresses that were intended to be alike all turn out to be completely different.

Once the costumes are ready, the duties of the wardrobe mistress become much the same as they are when the clothes are hired. She will supervise the stowing of the clothes into the large, American-cloth-lined-hampers (technically known as skips) in readiness for their transport to the theatre. And she should be there when they arrive in order to see that they are properly unpacked.

There is one last duty which she must perform and which does not fall to her lot when the costumes are hired; that is to receive them back when the show is over, and to store them away or otherwise dispose of them.

If sufficient space is not available to hang the dresses on hangers, collapsible cardboard boxes will be found most useful. These can also be made to take the place of skips for short journeys, in good weather, where there is little danger of their being thrown about or crushed. While the dresses are in store, suitable precautions must be taken against moth and damp.

That the wardrobe mistress may delegate all or any of her duties goes without saying. Perhaps it is a test of her capabilities as an organizer to examine the extent to which she has done so.

## ON THE SOPRANO ROLES

By D. GRAHAM DAVIS

Editor of "The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal"

GILBERT'S heroines fall in love with the heroes. There is no biological significance in that remark; it is explained by the fact that theatrical convention had to be observed, and in the seventies and eighties (if not to-day) this demanded a happy ending with the young people united. I have already written that these characters have little in common with their counterparts in musical comedy, or, for that matter, with the twentieth century outlook. Nowhere, perhaps, is this more in evidence than in the love-making of these characters. Not one of them surrenders herself to a passionate embrace; their kisses are those of a sister. One characteristic of the present day leading lady will be sought in vain in the Savoy heroines. "Sex appeal" is an ingredient entirely absent from the make-up of the Gilbertian damsel.

But there is one thing that these sopranos must have, and that is charm. Vivacity is not so much called for; this can be left to the soubrettes. Far too much reliance seems to be placed on the voice alone in many amateur societies. All these parts need to be acted—great skill in this direction is not called for outside Princess Ida and Elsie Maynard—and the acting remains in evidence all the time. Too often does one see gesture, facial expression, and, in fact, the whole sense of character, dropped when the music cue is given. Many, if not all, of the soprano songs are suitable for the concert hall, but while, say, Yum-Yum is on the stage, she must remain Yum-Yum. These words are not the "grouse" of a producer; they represent, almost verbatim, what a gifted musical director said while this article was actually being prepared.

The soprano parts have a real disadvantage in that they are so sketchily drawn. Gilbert's girls have been described, not without reason, as lifeless puppets. It is difficult to seize upon any outstanding disposition to help the characterization. Here and there they are more boldly drawn, but then efforts to read anything into the part are

pulled up by the glaring inconsistencies that stare one in the face. The soprano leads simply defy cold analysis. For all that, one can give some broad outlines (sometimes of a negative nature) to assist the actress in the portrayal of these parts, and indicate what special characteristics should be sought after, and brought out, in each.

THE PLAINTIFF (*Trial by Jury*) falls into the category of the "lyric soprano." This is natural, since the part is sung throughout. Strictly, the Plaintiff should not be presented as a shy, demure, or retiring damsel; ladies who bring breach of promise suits seldom possess these attributes, though they may endeavour to give themselves such an appearance before the court. The Plaintiff's tears, and they are many, should be of the crocodile variety, as will be confirmed by her quick recovery to display the charms of her trousseau to the bewitched jurors. Then we find this lady, seeking substantial solace for her broken heart, ready to accept, at a moment's notice, the proposal of the judge. There are no tears or swooning then. The accepted rendering should be followed—that of "the broken flower . . . the cheated maid"—provided it is realized that this attitude is really a pose, and is conveyed as such to the audience.

ALINE (*The Sorcerer*), also a lyric soprano, is one of the more consistent of the heroines, and offers more material than do most of them on which to build up one's characterization. She should be shown as at once proud and gracious, fair to look upon, gentle, and utterly unspoilt. She is deeply in love with Alexis, but must show (although not to him) the high-spirited girl's dislike of his air of proprietorship towards her. Of Mr. Wells she is afraid; a magician outside a story is not reckoned with in her philosophy. Towards the villagers her attitude is kind and natural with neither her mother's frigidity nor her lover's unwitting condescension. In consequence these villagers adore her. The actress should strive for the happy medium between an

air of rural simplicity and an appearance of sophistication, always remembering that she, alone of her sex, represents the younger generation of the "county" folk in this opera.

JOSEPHINE (*H.M.S. Pinafore*) is the first of the "dramatic sopranos." This means that greater powers of acting are called for than in the



Photo by J. W. Debenham

"THE LASS THAT LOVED A SAILOR"

Josephine (with Ralph Rackstraw), the first of the dramatic sopranos

"lyric" roles, but in all other ways the characteristics of the two categories are similar. From reading the libretto, Josephine may appear to be cold and proud. These are clearly the result of the surroundings in which she has been brought up. She is quite out of place on a man-of-war, so a rather subdued note, in direct contrast to the rollicking nature of the crew, is an asset. Coupled with the air of haughtiness there must be a trace of simplicity—or, rather, ingenuousness would be a better word. Josephine is not either hard or coy. And, despite some florid or coloratura singing, she

is unrelated to any *prima donna* of grand opera. So, although we accept a mature or buxom Mimi or Marguerite, Josephine must realize, in figure and appearance, the descriptions applied to her—such as "the fairest bud," "your most attractive daughter," etc.

MABEL (*The Pirates of Penzance*) has been classed, perhaps unconventionally, as a dramatic soprano. One may ask, why? Certainly she relies more on her ability to sing than to speak dialogue; she has but six speeches, of which the longest has fewer than forty words. It is when we come to the second act, with its long and affecting scene with Fredric, that one realizes how important a really good actress is to the part. The burlesque spirit of the opera is not openly visible in Mabel, though actually it is most evident in her part. The aria, "Poor Wand'ring One," although calling for no little vocal skill, was written by Sullivan with his tongue in his cheek. "Farmyard noises" was the phrase he applied to the trills and cadenzas of this "take-off" of the grand opera manner. Mabel must have a strong personality, so that the part (but not the actress) stands out above her sisters. That remark needs the qualification that the leading lady must, to some extent, shine above the chorus.

PATIENCE, who gives her name to the next opera, is only too frequently spoiled by being played on wrong lines. This is not altogether surprising when one considers how difficult a part it is to render convincingly, and how unlike anything in the world of the theatre or in real life this girl is. The only really satisfactory way to play Patience is as a simple, artless maiden, free from coquetry or guile. Her air of innocence should be suggested as real, and not assumed. At heart Patience is of a sunny disposition, but occasionally she is brought to tears, as on learning that love is a duty. She assiduously believes all she is told on this subject, and gets mixed up in some pretty problems in consequence. When this happens, her distress and perplexity should be suggested as being real and pressing.

PHYLLIS (*Iolanthe*) is in much the same mould among the lyric sopranos as is Patience, except that she lacks the milk-maid's naïveté and simplicity. She is intensely human in her jealousy, and when she turns to the peers after rejecting Strephon the audience must feel that she is doing

so in momentary pique rather than in any vindictive spirit. There is little in the character on which to base one's study, and the best results will be attained by becoming familiar with the scenes in which Phyllis appears, and then playing them in a perfectly natural manner with no more use of feminine wiles than the libretto will disclose as necessary.

PRINCESS IDA, the dramatic soprano who names this opera, is the best drawn of all Gilbert's heroines. Of course, the creation is Tennyson's, but the characterization is Gilbert's. Although, until the last act, she appears to be cold and unbending, this aspect of the character must be shown in such a way that it never becomes hard or unsympathetic. Ida may be imperious, but this is set off by charm and graciousness. This calls for a strong and pleasing personality as much as for acting and vocal talent of a high order.

Although a born organizer and leader, Ida's schemes have the disadvantage of being, often, impracticable. To the Princess they are real and feasible, and for this reason one cannot insist too strongly on the need for absolute sincerity in speaking the lines of the part, many of which abound in humour. Her pity for her father brings a glimpse of her gentler side; her song, following her warriors' excuses, displays her as quite human. Thence, to her acceptance of Hilarion, the progress from her early attitude towards mankind and her final surrender can be shown easily and naturally.

One thing that is absolutely essential in the part is correct and graceful diction, free from any tricks or mannerisms of speech. Immediately after her first entry Ida has a speech of forty-four lines of blank verse, which sets the keynote to the part. But how often is this speech spoiled by mannerisms or faulty diction? No princess who is also head of a university should describe the "foolish giant of the woods" as an "ellyfunt," as I heard recently. And this word "elephant" occurs four times in as many lines.

YUM-YUM (*The Mikado*) takes us back to the lyric soprano. Here is a part full of glaring inconsistencies. Yum-Yum, quite seriously, expresses her simplicity, yet the next moment makes it abundantly clear that she knows her way about. Some people try to take this as the manner in which the part should be played, but these contra-

dictions are unintentional, and must be ignored if the most pleasing results are to be obtained. What is wanted, then, is not an arch manner, but a demure, slightly pert, air, quite devoid of any suspicion of skittishness. The slightest touch of sophistication is a help (for schoolgirls in early Japan were probably quite as human as those of



Photo by J. W. Debenham

#### PHYLLIS, THE WARD IN CHANCERY

Daintiness and charm will go a long way in this vaguely drawn part

1885). There can be something almost repugnant in Ko-Ko's advances, which can best be avoided by Yuni-Yum suggesting the attitude, "Well, I don't want to kiss him, but I suppose I must. What a bore!" When she refers to herself as "a child of nature," as being "indeed beautiful," and as "the happiest girl in Japan," one should feel that she really believes what she is saying.

ROSE MAYBUD (*Ruddigore*), another lyric role, offers an almost thankless task to the actress who conscientiously tries to get into the skin of the

part. What character Rose does possess is not of sweetness, as she imagines, but of a coldly-calculating sort, hidden under a mask of sweet simplicity and charity. To disclose these not very pleasing attributes would be to lose the sympathy of the audience, and this must be preserved for the heroine. Perhaps the best way to present this unenviable characteristic is to ignore it; it is there without any insistence being placed on it. In this way the audience will not at once be aware what a nasty little girl "sweet Rose Maybud" really is, though they may arrive at this conclusion later. Remembering this, and that the spirit of the opera is burlesque, the best advice one can offer is to disregard the characterization (such as it is), and to strive after the suggestion of a worldly actress endeavouring, not too successfully, to portray the sweet village maiden of melodramatic tradition.

ELSIE MAYNARD (*The Women of the Guard*) calls for a flexible voice and strong dramatic powers, with plenty of light and shade in the acting. One important point to be remembered is that the *part* of Elsie is that of a young, inexperienced strolling player, and not that of some great *prima donna*. In most other respects the part is a mass of contradictions. In the opera, trouble and perplexities fall fast on Elsie's head, leaving her in a continuous state of bewilderment. The presentation of this attitude is not only helpful but essential, and it will help to obtain (and keep) the sympathy of the audience for the character. For, examined in cold blood, there is room to doubt if Elsie really deserves sympathy. To some extent this is a "showy" part, but that is inherent, and requires no help from the actress, who should aim at quiet simplicity, bringing out the character of the bewildered girl, and that alone, and leaving the more flamboyant side to fend for itself.

CASILDA (*The Gondoliers*) is a girl of strong will and dignity, both of which she inherits from her mother, the Duchess. She does not so much

despise her rogue of a father, as treat him with a certain resigned air of semi-contempt. She has her pride; what raises her indignation is not so much that she was married in infancy, but that she was not consulted. There is also needed the *appearance* of coldness in her manner towards Luiz in the presence of her parents. This must be shown so subtly that the audience is unaware of the position between Casilda and Luiz until they rush into each other's arms. Preventing the revelation from being too great a surprise makes it all the more important that her attitude should not seem too real. In the second act Casilda is bored with the whole proceedings while she is on the stage with her parents. When it is decided which of these preposterous monarchs is really king, she seems to be thinking, then will be the time to worry. One has seen too many Casildas adopt this air of ennui without such philosophical reasoning—in other words, young ladies taking absolutely no interest of any kind in what is going on during these scenes with which, although prominently on the stage, the actress is not directly concerned. The attitude of Casilda towards Tessa and Gianetta also frequently needs revision. This is sisterly, as she says, not haughty and condescending.

GIANETTA (*The Gondoliers*) is a lyric part that does not call for, or give, much descriptive scope. She is certainly a young lady who knows her own mind. She should also be somewhat high-spirited, although not so much as to detract from the lighter-hearted soubrette, Tessa, with whom she shares every scene. It is necessary that these two parts be evenly matched in ability and personality. Beyond the classification as soprano and soubrette there is nothing to distinguish the two sisters. One feels, perhaps, that Gianetta is more ruled by her head than her heart, and that, as a character, she is less well drawn than Tessa. Consequently, it is important to see that the actress is not overshadowed by the better-formed character of Tessa, or by the player of the part.

## NIJINSKY, MASSINE, AND AFTER

By ARNOLD L. HASKELL

*Joint-Founder of the Camargo Society ; Director of the Ballet Club*

IN our historical survey we have reached the climax of Fokine's evolution. The dance has developed and altered in character since his leadership, but changes have been more or less superficial. He has established once and for all ballet as we see it at the present day.

Before proceeding with this record it will be well to draw attention to certain points in my approach to the whole subject. As will have been seen, the dancer in the sacrifices she makes for her art is, perhaps, the supreme *amateur*, using the word in its finest connotation, of the stage to-day, while in her attention to detail she is the supreme *professional*. In any case, in the ordinary use of the word, amateur production of ballet is an impossibility. From our experience we know that even highly trained dancers, who appear together for a performance or two, seldom give of their best. The very essence of ballet is a permanent company with a fixed *maître de ballet*, and a school with its daily class attached. Many ballets require as many as 50, even 100, rehearsals. Moreover, ballet is exceedingly expensive; the bill for shoes and tights alone might amount to enough to clothe an ordinary production, while even if a piano be substituted for orchestra, the pianist's rehearsal fees are a heavy item. In some cases, notably in *Choreartium*, a panatrophe was used, but only in the early stages of creation. It is for these reasons that I am not going into the practical detail of ballet production. To do so would be entirely valueless. Later, however, I will give certain hints regarding the arranging of incidental dances in theatrical productions. While the historic approach, then, may not present the reader with anything concrete, it is practical in the sense that it gives a perspective on an art that can be completely mystifying to the tyro, confronted with an evening of three ballets in totally different moods and styles.

After Fokine, we come to the man who made his name in Fokine's own ballets and who has certainly altered the whole status of the male

dancer, who previously had been little more than a lifter and foil since the days of Taglioni. Nijinsky as a dancer may well have affected the future of ballet far more deeply than Nijinsky as choreographer. Owing to a combination of private circumstances, culminating in his tragic "death" as a dancer, we have seen but three of his works, *Le Sacre du Printemps*, *Jeux*, and *L'Après Midi d'un Faune*, and only the last survives in the current repertoire. One other work, *Tyl Eulenspiegel*, to music by Strauss, was produced in the United States. These four ballets, then, and some unfinished projects, are the only works of this now almost legendary figure, and it is not easy to gauge his influence in choreography as a whole, though it has certainly been far more extensive than the actual amount of work done, and curiously enough in an entirely opposite direction from the ballets in which he made his great name. His theories, not fully matured at the time of his retirement from dancing, are somewhat complex and negative when explained in words. Some quotations from Mme Nijinsky's life of her husband will help to reveal his ideas, which will be clearer to anyone who has seen *L'Après Midi d'un Faune*.

"Nijinsky made a very definite distinction between movement and the dance, which is a combination of movements. It was clear to him that the first and most important thing is to express an idea through movement, as a writer through words, as a musician through notes on a scale.

"Nijinsky treated movement literally, as the poet the word. He eliminated the floating, sinuous gestures, the half gestures, and every unnecessary move. He allowed only definitely rhythmic and absolutely essential steps, as in verse one only uses the words needed to express the idea without rhetoric or embroidery for its own sake. He established a prosody of movement, one single movement for a single action."

While his "new technique" has been adapted and used from time to time, it has caused no real revolution in dancing. The classical technique that gave Nijinsky himself his art still reigns supreme. It was, however, in the practical demonstration of the facts that the choreographer should not be restricted in his use of movement



ALEXANDRA DANILOVA IN MASSINE'S  
"LE BEAU DANUBE"

and that there were not two distinct categories of movement: (a) beautiful, graceful, (b) jerky, ugly, inharmonious, and that the second group should never in any circumstances be used, that he was a genuine pioneer. His ballets once again shook the spectator out of his complacency, and made him see the intimate relationship between ballet, drama, and those vital emotions and ideas that could not be expressed by any other medium.

In Fokine's *Petrouchka* there was a mighty moving drama that went deep into primitive fears and emotions, to witchcraft, jealousy, and the fear of being locked up. Its form was such that many may not have realized its true depth. Nijinsky's work "shocked" and made one take stock once again. He, too, had vital things to show, in *Sacre du Printemps*, the youth of the world, in *Jeux*, the modern conception of love, flirtation, the youth of individuals, and in *L'Après Midi d'un Faune*, the true and essential archaic Greece: to quote the great Rodin: "The perfect personification of the ideals of the beauty of the old Greeks."

Had I been writing of Massine, Nijinsky's immediate successor both as dancer and choreographer, a year ago even, my attitude would have been entirely different. I would have spoken of him as the creator of several first-class works and as someone worthy to continue a great tradition. To-day, after the production of *Choreartium*, yet after some fifteen years of work on a high level indeed, Massine shows himself to be like his predecessors—a great innovator, a creative artist who has freed the dance still further from the many restrictions that prejudice has placed upon it. Fokine's *Sylphides* was obviously pure dancing, with no plot or story, but the ballet was arranged to definite dances by Chopin. *Les Presages*, Massine's first great symphonic work (Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony), had a definite symbolism, and, moreover, this composer was closely connected with ballet, and the music is essentially balletic. It is a different matter with Brahms's Fourth Symphony. Here the choreographer was dealing with abstract music, and not only courting the practical danger of offending susceptibilities, but also the artistic one of putting into the form of action ideas totally hostile to the composer. He set himself a gigantic task, a partnership with Brahms, and by his success showed that dancing, pure dancing, movement for the sake of its intrinsic beauty and significance, has no limitations. Lest it be suspected that the ballet critic is too partial, I would like to quote that great musical critic, Ernest Newman, who has never shown himself particularly sympathetic to ballet, and who, so to speak, holds a watching brief for Brahms.

"Massine showed the common sense we might



have expected of him when he put aside all thought of reading a story into Brahms's symphony and decided to approach it as music pure and simple. . . . If music is to be ruled out from ballet when it is 'pure' music, what justification is there for *Les Sylphides* for example? There is no more programme in Chopin's music than there is in that of Brahms; yet the enduring success of *Les Sylphides* proves that choreographic figures can be devised that are felt to be not in the least alien to the spirit and the build of this music. We are bound to grant, I think, that there is nothing *a priori* incongruous in the mating of 'pure' music, whether that of Brahms or of any other composer, with the lines and masses and movements of the ballet. . . . The only question is to what extent the choreographer has succeeded."

After an interesting discussion on nationality, in which he justifies Massine for a non-German interpretation, he goes on to say:

"What has Massine done with the remainder of the symphony? Here I can only wonder at the lack of imagination that prevents some people from seeing the points of genius with which Massine's choreographic score, so to call it, positively bristles. There can, of course, be no question of a translation of the 'meaning' of this music as a whole into terms of another art: this kind of music is just itself, the expression of something to which there is no real equivalent in any other art. But if there is no equivalent, surely there can be parallelisms; surely certain elements in the musical design can be counter-parted in choreographic design, certain gestures of the music, certain softenings and hardenings of the colours can be suggested quite well in the more objective medium. I found myself profoundly interested in watching these correspondences, many of which gave me a fresh respect for Massine's genius. Unfortunately, as I have remarked before in a similar connexion, there is no way of making these correspondences clear to the reader without quoting the musical passages in question side by side with photographs of the particular moments of the ballet with which they are associated. But how any musical listener in the audience who knows the Brahms score and has any imagination at all could fail to perceive these extraordinary parallelisms I confess myself unable to understand.

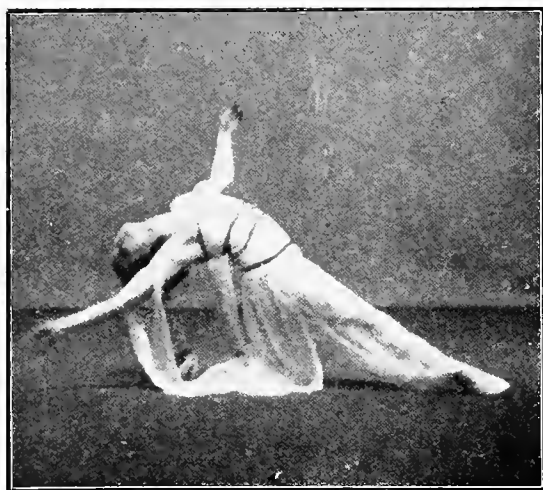
"The opening entry of these two figures, for instance, with their curious gliding, undulating motion seemed to me as perfect a translation into visible motion of the well-known dip and rise of the first phrase in the violins as could possibly be conceived. I could cite similar felicities of parallelism by the hundred; the sense of the



RIABONCHINSKA AND MASSINE IN MASSINE'S  
"SCUOLA DI BALLO"

musical design conveyed for instance by the entry of the same two figures each time the first subject of the symphony assumed a leading part in the structure, the subtle distinctions invariably made in choreography between the basic elements in the music and the transitional passages—between the bones as it were and the cartilages—the curious correspondence between harshness in the harmonies and musical colours and angularities or violences in the gestures, and so on. In the finale, which, as the reader no doubt knows, is in *passacaglia* form—a series of variations upon a ground figure—Massine seems to me to have done wonders. He typifies the commanding

main theme by six black figures that persist through the whole movement as the ground



PEARL ARGYLE IN FREDERICK ASHTON'S  
"LADY OF SHALOTT" (FROM A FILM)

bass itself persists in music; and he intensifies or thins out the action and the groupings in accordance with the changing texture of the variations." (*The Sunday Times*, 29th Oct., 1933.)

*Choreartium* will stand as a landmark of choreography, apart from its musical value, from a purely interpretative point of view. It presents some forty minutes of complicated technical movement that could be performed only by the highly finished dancer, that grips one as a spectacle, without ever resorting to anything forced, unnatural, or eccentric. It advances ballet while going to its origins for its means; it places choreography on the level of sculpture and fresco painting.

This sudden artistic triumph of a choreographer of many years' standing, who has already given us such mature works as *Le Chapeau Tricorne*, *Pulcinella*, *La Boutique Fantasque*, is amazing. The man who can create *Le Beau Danube*, Strauss, and Vienna, without banality, the spirited pastiche *Scuola di Ballo*, the truly *surréaliste* *Jeux d'Enfants*, *Les Presages*, and the mighty *Choreartium*, with its Michelangesque groups, is perhaps the only person fitted to train the young dancers of to-day. In between Mas-

sine's two reigns there have been other choreographers of considerable talent, Bronislava Nijinsky and George Balanchin. Both have produced memorable works. The true line of succession reads: Petipa—Fokine—Massine, with a Nijinsky interlude between the last two.

In England we have Ninette de Valois and Frederick Ashton, who are experienced, and have done fine work. De Valois's *Job* would be outstanding anywhere, while Ashton's *Capriol Suite* is a first-class example of the way in which folk material may be made into a ballet, while his Pre-Raphaelite *Lady of Shalott* is true English Romanticism, owing nothing to foreign influences. These choreographers, who have, without doubt, influenced the English dance, and who have certainly delighted thousands, are too local in fame to have played a part in the development of our art. However much England contains magnificent raw material, the finest and most appreciative of audiences, ballet has yet to be made indigenous, and a national tradition must be slowly evolved.



PEARL ARGYLE IN FREDERICK ASHTON'S  
"LADY OF SHALOTT" (FROM A FILM)

The Russians, following the French and Italians, are to-day the holders of the tradition, and still strong creative forces.

# HOW TO REHEARSE YOUR PLAY

By CONSUELO M. DE REYES

*Producer, Little Theatre, Citizen House, Bath, and Everyman Theatre, Hampstead; Lecturer in Drama, University College, Exeter*

**A**N essential factor in successful play production is the thoroughness with which rehearsals are conducted.

Members of the cast must wish to attend rehearsals not only for the sake of the play and their public, but also for the happy comradeship that they achieve, and from a spirit of team work by which no member will let down another through absence.

The successful rehearsal method cannot, unfortunately, be learnt. It is possible to secure excellent textbooks on the making of scenery, stage technique, etc., but the rehearsal process, like any form of teaching, depends almost wholly on the personality of the director. There are, of course, certain suggestions that may be given, and the most important of these is the fact that rehearsing a play is a learning process both for actor and director, and that it is impossible to learn or to teach everything at once. I have frequently been present at rehearsals where an over-zealous producer has stopped the actors again and again in a preliminary rehearsal in order to acquaint them of small details that should only have been added at the final rehearsals. The result was that the mind became overburdened with a mass of suggestions that completely obliterated the main theme of the play, and thus rendered the actors incapable of appreciating its significance. Like an artist who is painting on a large canvas, the producer should at first be content to sketch in only the broad outlines of his theme, then stand back from his work, criticize its effect upon the spectator, and add the necessary details later.

The best result can only be obtained if the producer takes his actors into his confidence and explains to them the method on which he is building up the play. Many producers like to sketch in the main movements first, and during this period they will not be paying any attention to the voice, but the actor who does not understand this may be worried because he is not

receiving any help with his diction, or because the timing may seem unsatisfactory at the point when the director is purposely neglecting this in order to work out each detail of characterization. Once the general plan of working is known, the actors will readily fall in with it and assist the producer considerably by contributing their own ideas.

Whatever methods a producer may desire to adopt, four steps are recognizable in the rehearsal process: (1) the actors must first become familiar with the main theme of the play; (2) they must then work out the principal movements of the play, the entrances, exits, changes in position, etc., (3) every detail of the characterization must be studied and learnt; (4) all these must be combined in the final rehearsals for pace and unity of performance.

These processes are not equal in duration of time, for the period given to characterization must always remain the longest and will probably occupy two thirds of the whole.

It is impossible to state how much time is needed to rehearse a play, as this depends greatly on the experience and ability of the actors. We have usually found that our Players, who are free for only a couple of hours each week-day evening, require at least three weeks to rehearse a full-length play, and if it is possible to allow a month for rehearsal the result is far better. During our Vacation Schools, when the training is intensive and our members devote about eight hours a day for a period of ten days, we are able to give excellent performances of ten one-act plays during the period, but no member, of course, acts in more than two or three of the plays. Many producers declare that a total of six to eight hours is sufficient for the production of a one-act play, and undoubtedly actors are apt to grow "stale" if they are forced to concentrate for too long on a single play.

Rehearsals should open with a reading of the entire play, after which the first act should be

studied. Two or three rehearsals should work out the movement and a considerable amount of detail in the first act. By the fourth or fifth rehearsal it should be possible to work on both the first and second acts, the first for further details, and the second for movement. Then the first act may be gone over only at every second rehearsal and the second and third acts taken up. Some working scheme of this kind is essential. It is never wise to wait until the first act is perfected before going to the others; they should all be moving along. Towards the end of the rehearsals, it is wise to work on the last act first and then to revise the earlier acts. At the last two or three rehearsals it should be possible to run through the entire play with the acts in proper order, as it is essential to get the fluidity of action running smoothly through the entire play and also to obviate any undue waits.

During the preliminary study, which constitutes the business of the first stage, the actors must gain a clear conception of the characters that they are to play and also study the inter-relations of the characters upon one another. It is essential that they should understand and feel the main theme of the play, and anything that can be done to further this, such as securing the presence of the author to outline the characters as he intended them to be, or arranging debates among the players, should be encouraged. Many of our most famous actors and actresses have told me how much they have gained from Bernard Shaw's expositions in this manner which enabled them to see the characters just as he intended them to be.

The producer may then adopt one of several methods in directing the play. He may follow the theory of Gordon Craig, whereby the producer is the great dramatic artist who expresses himself with the aid of scenery, lights, movement, actors, etc., in the same way as the sculptor or painter expresses himself through the medium of clay or pigment. These media should be as plastic and unresisting as possible. From this, it follows that the greatest actor is one with body and voice most completely at the service of the director. The less emotion the actor brings to his interpretation of his part the better, for the director will supply all emotion. All that is needed is that the actor should be able to move and speak so as to express the director.

This, of course, reduces the greatest actor to the position of a super-puppet with no individual ideas to interfere with those of the director.

Another conception is the entire reverse. According to this the actor is the dramatic artist who should be interfered with as little as possible; he should be allowed to work out his individual ideas, and the director is merely a supervising artist, while the fewer suggestions he makes the better.

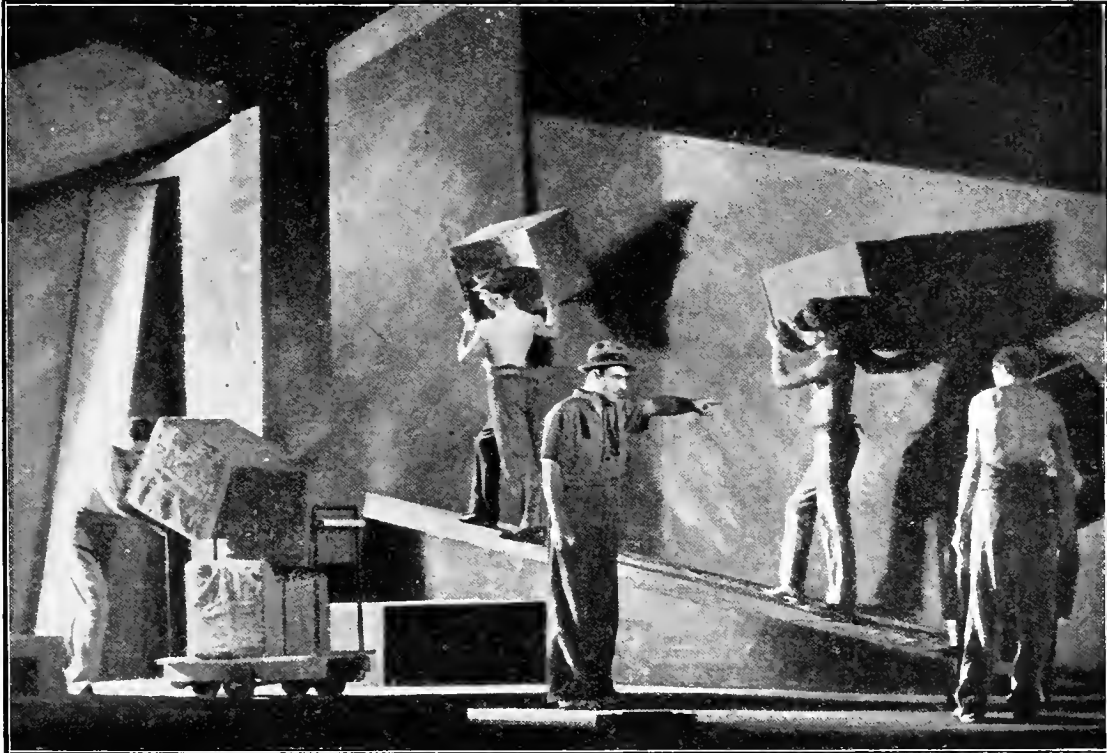
Possibly the ideal director lies halfway between these two schools of thought. Throughout, his purpose is to unify, to draw together the strangely diverse characters, and then to adjust the final artistry of the production between them. To effect this he must, perhaps, augment the personality of one and diminish the theatrical appeal of another of his actors. He does not insist on imposing his own conception on his company, but he does not hesitate to help them where desirable. The weakness of the Craig theory is that it demands a super-director, and even where a director has a distinct impression of how a character ought to be played, the actor may aid in augmenting this impression. The weakness of allowing the actor to dictate wholly the terms of his own art is obvious, since he may thus dwarf the stature of all others and undermine the structure of the play. The true conception of rehearsals is that they are a process of continuous growth under the director's guidance.

Again, the actual processes of rehearsal differ. Some directors will give members copies of the play to take home and study before the general reading. This method is advantageous both with groups of actors who are so inexperienced that they need previous study to make a general reading of any value, and with those who are so experienced that they can use their own ingenuity and imagination in the development of the part. The weakness of this method lies in the fact that false impressions may be gathered, and that there is no way of seeing that actors agree as to their general conceptions. Other directors prefer to read the play to the cast for the first time or to request the author to do so. Such a reading is undoubtedly valuable where time is short, as it gives everyone a clear idea of the play and of the various characters, but it has the disadvantage of imposing the director's ideals, and even perhaps his mannerisms, on the actors, since they will

almost inevitably tend to copy him. The method usually followed at Citizen House is perhaps the most creative, though also the most difficult. Each actor reads the lines of the character that he is to play and thus gives the original impression. The actor may, therefore, be said to create his part, but upon the producer falls

be he should know the settings and costumes that are to be used and all the other things that go to make up the picture.

A stage model and designs for costumes, however rough, will be of the greatest assistance in helping the actors to visualize the play. Many directors work out the movement of their actors



*Photo by J. W. Debenham*

SCENE FROM "THE AGE OF PLenty" AS PRODUCED AT THE EMBASSY THEATRE

Simple method of building a raised exit by means of a rostrum

the burden of seeing that the conceptions are correct.

The function of the second stage of rehearsals is to "block out" the movement of the play, to determine where actors come in and go out, and to decide their positions while they are on the stage. During this time everyone should concentrate on the idea of movement, and there should be no attempt to read lines with special emphasis. In working out the movement of a play, the director is like an artist designing a picture, and in order to ascertain what the general effect will

be before rehearsal, using chessmen as puppets, but in any case it is essential that the director should know exactly what he requires each character to do. If the play is not being rehearsed on the stage where it is to be played, it is important that the size of the stage should be marked in chalk on the floor, together with an outline of all doors and windows. The producer must keep in mind the general ideas of picture conception, and thus produce in his stage design adequate spacing, balance, emphasis, and mass and colour value. He must always remember that a well-balanced picture has

a centre of interest, and that nothing should be allowed to militate against that centre of interest. He must decide what the important action is, and then do all in his power to emphasize it. Properties should be used from the earliest rehearsals. Frequently, important movements have to be altered if properties are introduced late, and a sense of awkwardness results. Actors should be taught to work out to the extreme limits of the stage. In early rehearsals they will often tend to huddle behind pieces of furniture or to stand too close to one another. Grouping should, moreover, always represent the main theme. Thus, if there are two players opposing each other, such as Shylock and Antonio, Shylock and his friends would naturally tend to stand on one side of the stage and Antonio and Bassanio on the other. When Portia enters and endeavours to intervene she will naturally take up the position which remains open midway between the two groups and from which she can turn from one to another. Such movement, if it is real and lifelike, will always tend to be symbolic, just as when an actor changes his mind he leaves one group to walk over and join another, or again when he tries to separate two who are struggling he naturally forces himself between them.

The third rehearsal process, which consists of the building up of characterization, is by far the most important. During this period every detail of walking, sitting down, use of arms and legs, of solo and of concerted actions, must be studied. The actors must above all try to feel what the characters they are portraying would do in similar circumstances. The memorization of the play should be completed by the fifth or sixth rehearsal, and it is wise to fix a date after which parts are not to appear on the stage, and the actors must depend on promptings, no matter how many prompts are needed. Prompters' rehearsals, during which the actors are merely taught their lines by the prompter, are often useful, as they tend to develop a group consciousness or memory. The actors should meet at such rehearsals merely to repeat their lines as quickly and smoothly as possible with no thought for anything else.

Great care must be taken from the first rehearsal to ensure that the actor's voice carries to

the farthest part of the house, as a tendency to inaudibility once allowed at rehearsals will afterwards be found most difficult to correct. Firm breath control and correct enunciation are the secrets of a good voice. Words should be sharp and clear cut, and the most common fault of all amateurs—that of dropping the voice at the end of sentences—must be carefully avoided. Above all, every effort should be made to keep the voice fresh. Each line should be said as if for the first and only occasion, to give what has been termed "the illusion of the first time." The play that contrives to keep this absolute spontaneity will be the one most calculated to succeed. Frequently, the device of silent lines, called "bridging," may be helpful in aiding the proper delivery of words. These lines are invented to be said silently before or after the spoken words. They are spoken under the breath and establish an emotional context. They are also extremely useful in timing.

During these rehearsals will come the invention of business or those movements and characteristics that are intended to interpret the personality. Gestures, eye work, and facial expressions that give ease and lifelikeness to the character must now be worked out and eventually both emotion and intellect must be called in to portray the part.

There is intense argument from time to time as to whether acting is emotional and the actor should live the part, or whether it is intellectual and he should merely suggest it. Sarah Bernhardt used to say that she was an emotional actress, while Coquelin claimed to be an intellectual actor, but intellect played a great part in Bernhardt's representations, and Coquelin used to pace up and down the stage throwing himself into his part. The real truth lies in the fact that both elements must be present in successful acting; the greater the artist the more a species of double consciousness would seem to appear. On the one hand, the actor loves his individuality and abandons himself to the absorbing emotions that belong to the character he interprets. On the other hand, he would seem to stand outside himself, watching himself act, regulating and controlling his effects. In such a manner he can exercise perfect command upon the emotions of his audience, and in this lies the fulfilment of dramatic art.

## THE TREASURER'S DUTIES

By REGINALD A. RAWLINGS

IN keeping the accounts of an amateur theatrical society there are two essential functions of the accounts to be kept in view: (1) that the accounts should disclose at any time the exact balance of cash in hand, and (2) after each production the treasurer should be able to produce a clear statement of accounts, so analysed that the finances of each separate section of the society's activities can be seen at a glance.

It is advisable that all moneys received be paid into the bank without delay, and that all payments, except those that fall strictly within the bounds of petty cash, be made by cheque. Not

and a receipt obtained. The Expenditure Book should be entered up from the counterfoils of the cheque book, each item going first into the Total column and then extended into the analysis columns, as in the case of the receipts. Only payments made by cheque must be entered in this book, and as all payments into the bank are carried to the left-hand column from the Receipts Book, the treasurer can at any time see from his Expenditure Book exactly what balance remains to the society's credit at the bank.

As far as possible the treasurer should be careful to see that he obtains a receipt for all items of

### RECEIPTS BOOK

Date	To Bank	Date	Received from	Total	Subscriptions	Tickets	Programme Sales	Refreshments

### EXPENDITURE BOOK

Date	At Bank	Date	Paid to	Total	Rent	Printing	Royalties	Costumes

only does adherence to this plan enable the auditors of the society to check the accounts easily, but it safeguards the treasurer himself.

A ledger is not an essential part of a small society's accounting system. An analysed cash book for receipts, another analysed book for payments, and a petty cash book are all that are necessary. A receipt should be given for all money received, even if it is merely received from another official of the society. From the counterfoils of the receipts the treasurer enters up his Receipts Book, placing the total amount received in the Total column and then extending the item into the appropriate analysis column. As the money is paid into the bank the Total column should be ruled off and the appropriate entry made in the Bank column.

All major payments should be made by cheque

and expenditure, and it is a good plan for him to have receipt vouchers in hand so that he can obtain receipts for incidental items that are paid through petty cash. The Petty Cash Book should be analysed in the same way as the Cash Book kept for cheque payments. The Sundries column should never be allowed to assume large proportions; if it does there is something lacking in the analysis. The treasurer should never keep more than a pre-arranged amount of petty cash in hand, and when the balance becomes low a cheque should be drawn for replenishment. Small amounts of cash received should never be taken into credit of the petty cash, but should be paid into the bank in accordance with the general scheme.

Receipts and vouchers of all kinds should be carefully preserved, and for the convenience of the auditors arranged in the same order as the



items they refer to occur in the books. The treasurer should call for the Bank Pass Book periodically and compare the balance shown there with that appearing in his own accounts; and whenever an audit is to be conducted the bank should be asked to send a balance certificate direct to the auditors.

When the final accounts of a production are to be presented the treasurer should draw up a tabulated statement of accounts from his three books. The Petty Cash Book and cheque Ex-

penditure Book should be combined in total and analysis columns and shown in conjunction with the totals of the Receipts Book, so that receipts and expenditure in respect of such items as programmes, etc., are clearly shown. Comparisons of the current accounts with those of previous years are interesting and useful to the committee, and the treasurer will do well to present such a statement whenever possible. The accounts should be audited and certified by the auditors before they are issued to the members in general.

— AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY  
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 1933

	Total			1932	Spring Production			1932	Autumn Production			1932
	£	s.	d.	£	£	s.	d.	£	£	s.	d.	£
<i>Receipts—</i>												
Subscriptions . . . . .	30	15	—	34								
Members' Bookings . . . . .	60	11	—	56	35	12	0	29	24	8	6	27
Public Bookings . . . . .	163	12	6	140	84	8	6	69	79	4	—	71
Programme Advertisements . . . . .	10	10	—	10	5	5	—	5	5	5	—	5
Programme Sales . . . . .	12	13	4	11	7	3	2	6	5	10	2	5
Refreshment Sales . . . . .	17	8	6	19	10	1	—	10	7	7	6	9
Cloakroom Receipts . . . . .	5	4	3	5	3	2	3	3	2	2	—	2
Loan of Costumes . . . . .	11	—	—	8								
Sundries . . . . .	1	4	—	1		13	6	1		10	6	
<b>Total Receipts . . . . .</b>	<b>£318</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>£146</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>£124</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>*8</b>	<b>119</b>
<i>Expenditure—</i>												
Rent of Hall . . . . .	58	—	—	58	29	—	—	29	29	—	—	29
Rehearsal Rooms . . . . .	36	—	—	46	23	—	—	23	23	—	—	23
Scenery Expenditure . . . . .	16	18	—	12	8	18	—	7	8	—	—	5
Hire of Equipment . . . . .	15	—	—	15	7	10	—	8	7	10	—	7
Stage Hands' Wages . . . . .	10	—	—	10	5	4	—	5	4	10	—	5
Royalties . . . . .	16	16	—	20	10	10	—	13	6	6	—	7
Libretti and Books . . . . .	5	5	—	8	3	—	—	5	2	5	—	3
Hire of Costumes, etc . . . . .	28	8	6	14	18	4	6	8	10	4	—	6
Costumes Purchased . . . . .	18	10	—	25	10	—	—	13	8	10	—	12
Carriage . . . . .	2	1	—	1	2	1	—					1
Advertising . . . . .	18	10	—	20	10	10	—	11	8	—	—	9
Printing . . . . .	18	—	—	14	10	2	—	7	7	18	—	7
Refreshment Purchases . . . . .	10	2	3	12	6	—	—	7	4	2	3	5
Producer's Expenses . . . . .	8	—	—	4	5	3	—	2	2	17	—	2
Secretary's Expenses . . . . .	6	1	—	4								
Cheque Book and Postages . . . . .	4	4	6	3								
Sundries . . . . .	4	3	—	3	2	1	—	2	2	2	—	1
<b>Total Expenditure . . . . .</b>	<b>£285</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>£151</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>£124</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>122</b>
<b>BALANCE . . . . .</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>— 4</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>— 17</b>	<b>— =</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>— 3</b>

*Extract*

	£	s.	d.
Cash Balance b/f	28	4	6
Balance, 1933 . . . . .	32	19	4

£61 3 10

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Programmes—						
Sales . . . . .	12	13	4			
Advertisement . . . . .	10	10	—			
Printing . . . . .				23	3	4
				7	10	—

£15 13 4

	£	s.	d.
Refreshments—			
Sales . . . . .	17	8	6
Purchases . . . . .	10	2	3

£7 6 3







*Photo by Dorothy Wilding*

MISS GLADYS COOPER

# ACTING IN TRAGEDY

By GLADYS COOPER

IT is obvious to anyone who knows the contemporary theatre that playgoers are not as fond of tragedy as they are of comedy, farce, and other forms of theatrical entertainment that cannot be given any one label. The theatre remains the people's playhouse, and there are thousands of theatregoers who refuse to think that there is something to be extracted from tragedy that is more valuable, even from a true entertainment point of view, than anything that is inherent in, say, farce. Mr. Sydney W. Carroll, when he was the dramatic critic of *The Sunday Times*, entered a plea for the revival of tragedy. His article is worth quoting because it focuses attention on points that must be borne in mind by actors and actresses in tragedy, by producers, and, in some respects, by ordinary theatregoers—the people who make or mar box office successes, who go to the theatre to be “entertained” (I suppose all theatregoers have entertainment in mind—but ideas of what constitutes entertainment differ), and who must have pleasant themes, happy endings, and the like. Mr. Carroll wrote: “. . . high tragedy is at a discount in the English theatre to-day. It is a pity. The great tragedy is a noble thing. It must have moral truth as its foundation. It must be profoundly, persuasively ethical. It should teach us how to govern our lives. It assists us in control of ourselves. It calls for simplicity in design—simplicity in treatment, sublimity of theme, and courage in facing the inevitable. It has to be of a finer texture—cast in a purer mould than any other form of dramatic composition. It is the only form of play in which grandeur has any place. It is the only medium through which terror can be terrible, despair desperate, and beauty beautiful. It is the only real vehicle for stage eloquence. The English language is not only at its happiest, but in its most elevated mood in tragedy. The greatest passions become ignoble, pitiful, or laughable, if passed through the mint of any other kind of drama. With the aid of the truly tragic writer they take on rich lines and wondrous forms that

dignify them and idealize them beyond our dreams.”

What points of magnetism for actors and actresses in this enumeration of qualities! Obviously, tragedy is of the material that gives the histrionically skilled their best chance.

My object in stimulating thought on the significance of tragedy is to try, even though indirectly, to suggest convincingly that supporters of the theatre, as well as “professionals,” could usefully cultivate a genuine interest in all forms of theatrical entertainment. Amateurs can help forward the cultivation of taste. They can create audiences for tragedy by judiciously varying the plays that they produce, although readers of Seymour Hicks (in *Acting*) are warned to cast out of their minds any idea of producing *Tragedy*, “remembering that there are very few professional actors who are unable to be really funny in *Hamlet*.” Amateurs ought not to choose a play for production merely because it is an entertaining play, or because it has a “fat part” in it for the wife of an official, or because the production of it will make a big profit. They should think in terms of dramatic and theatrical art, by which I do not mean that they need be highbrow, reflectors of the coterie spirit, and so on. I mean that they should interest themselves in the best of all kinds. Then they cannot ignore tragedy. By the way, I touch on the question of the motives that should underlie the choosing of a play in my book (*Gladys Cooper*), in which I state—

Among the many questions I am *continually* being asked these *continually* crop up.

“How do you choose your plays?”

“Do you choose a play that has a ‘fat’ part in it for yourself?”

“Have you a particular ‘type’ that you like?”

“How is it your plays are always successful when others so often fail; do you put it down to your own box-office attraction?”

I will take these questions in order and endeavour to convey what I feel and think about the

plays I have presented and acted in at my own theatre.

To start with, I am entirely and absolutely in agreement with Shakespeare when he wrote these words: "The play's the thing—wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King."

"The play's the thing" for me foremost and every time.

I choose a play very much as I choose a house to live in—by instinct. I *know* when I have read a play whether I can do it or not, whether I think it is worth doing or not, and whether it is going to make money or not . . .

Replying to my next question, I do *not* choose a play that has a "fat" part for myself. I think that is proved by some of the parts I have played. When I read the play *Cynara* I liked it and decided to produce it, and then the question arose "there was no part suitable for me." The wife was so short a part, she had so little to do, she was off the stage so long.

The part was very difficult. It required an experienced actress. No star would play it—it was not a big enough part.

I talked it over with my producer and decided to play it myself. It was the most difficult part I have ever played . . .

The next question to reply to is "Have you a particular type you like?"

I hardly know what to answer to this. I really have no particular "type" at all, for I have never wished to be a one-type actress. I like variety. I like to play different "types" of women. I have portrayed a large number of feminine characters from fluffy "naughty wives" to hard-boiled murderesses as in *The Letter* . . .

The last question I am called upon to answer needs the most careful consideration of all.

"How is it your plays are always successful?"

That takes me back to the first thing I wrote, because "The play's the thing." People may go to the theatre to see a favourite actor or actress,

but they will not go to bad plays. If their favourite is acting in a dull or dreary play, they don't want to see him or her as the case may be.

It is, I think, stimulating, though at the time it may also be most unpleasant, to experience failure. I recall my first straight part. It was in *Half a Crown*, which ran only ten nights—just threepence a night! Since then I have appeared in many plays of widely differing types. I know that many theatrogoers remember me best in *My Lady's Dress*. As I have pointed out, I am not prepared to admit that I have a favourite play.

But what of acting in tragedy? My opinions, based on personal experience, observation, and knowledge of the contemporary stage can easily be summarized.

Great tragedy, it has been said, "depends for its aesthetic excitement on the development in, and surprise of, character." Any player in tragedy, to be successful, must study a character as an integral part of the whole play. The play will not be understood unless the character is understood. Understanding of the character must be related to understanding of the other characters. In tragic acting there is little scope for uncontrolled artificiality—all acting, in a sense, is artificial. Affectation will strike a wrong note. Superficiality will be discordant, not smart and effective. There are "tricks of acting" as there are tricks of any trade, but acting in tragedy must be free from obvious theatrical tricks. Just as tragedy itself "rings true," so portrayal of a character in tragedy requires to be instantly recognizable in terms of its own qualities. Stylistic mannerisms, theatrical posturings, etc., cannot successfully be employed for the interpretation of tragedy. There must be adequacy of technique not only to control emotions, but also to reveal them and to express them. In short, the keynote must be sincerity. Interpretation must be soaked with inevitability, which is the very spirit of tragedy.



# PRODUCING TRAGEDY

By C. B. PURDOM

*Author of "Producing Plays," etc., Dramatic Critic; Founder of Letchworth Players and Welwyn Garden City Theatre; Hon. Treasurer, National Festival of Community Drama; Editor of "New Britain"*

IF I had not the actor in mind when writing this contribution I should have omitted writing it altogether; for why speak of producing tragedy to-day when nobody wants it and when there is no contemporary tragic drama whatever? The answer is that the actor must practise his art in tragic plays or he will never acquire it.

Acting began with tragedy. The Greek theatre was the home of tragedy; poetry began there and acting too. The plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides are still the unsurpassed models of drama, though we cannot play them and have no interest in them, except a merely literary one. Why do the plays of these old dramatists retain their supremacy? Because they express in a form that has never been excelled the conflict between good and evil, which is at the core of human life. Tragedy is the noblest form of play for that reason; it is the archetypal drama; it exhibits universal man of every age in his true aspect—torn between the desires of good and evil, tempted, fallen, defeated, yet victorious.

Tragedy depends upon the sense of the nobility of human nature. It shows the divine origin of man and points towards his sublime fate. Its characters therefore are princes and kings, or ordinary men who have the stature of princes and kings. It shows men who possess power, who have strong wills, who are masters of fate, who are beaten, overcome by greater power, weakened in will, overmastered by fate. So that unless a people believes in man and what man can accomplish, it can have no tragedy; for little men, timid, uncertain, faltering men, who are servants, who have no choice, who start life at a disadvantage and have no hope, are not subjects of tragedy. No one whose fate is of no consequence can become a tragic character; only representative men and women, those upon whose fate hangs the future of mankind, are tragic characters.

It is easy to see, therefore, why we have no tragedy now. There must be firm belief, to start

with, which we have not. There must be conviction of the greatness of human destiny, which we are uncertain about. There must be understanding of the fact that man creates his own destiny, which we question. There must be the belief that there are laws of life, inherent in the spiritual realm, ignored by man at his peril, which we are not prepared to admit. There must be noble individuals, though we doubt their existence. Finally, there must be the ability to contemplate utter failure and yet know for certain that the last word has not been spoken and that the spirit of defeated man will rise again. We have no tragedy because the psychic conditions for it do not exist.

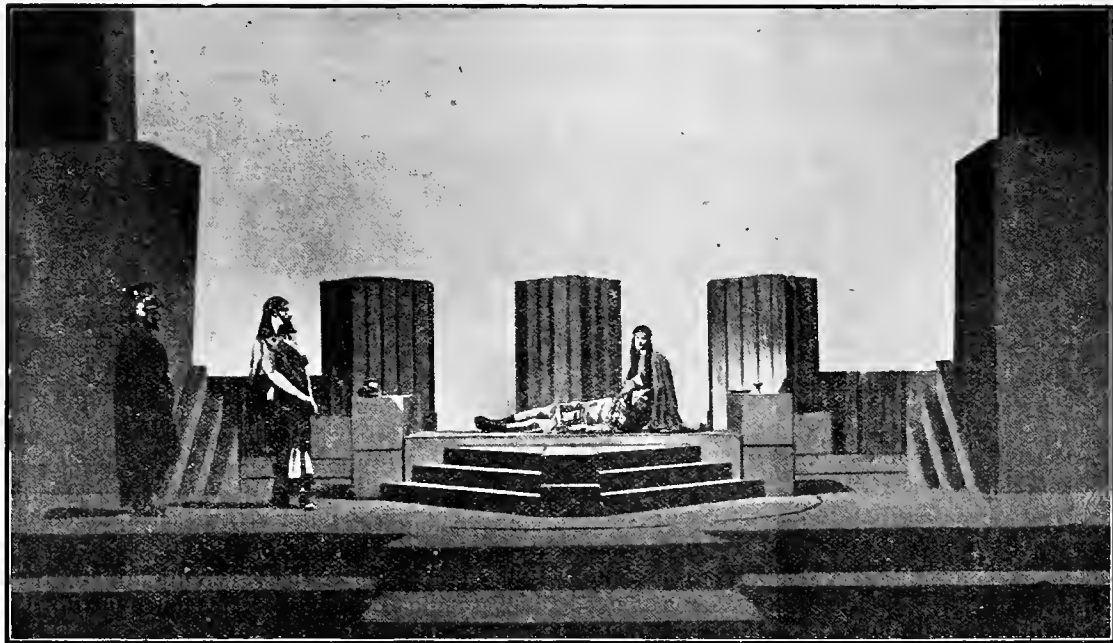
There has been no tragic play (except Shakespeare) that has held the English stage since the Industrial Revolution. Even the Great War produced none, for *Journey's End* was tragic-comedy. There have been tragic dramatists, unacted as Shelley was, or regarded with polite respect as Mr. John Masefield is, or treated as foreign curiosities as Ibsen and Strindberg have been. Tragedy has not been able to exist upon our stage—and the modern writers I have mentioned do not make a tragic drama, for their works are individual rather than national—because we cannot bear the sharp reality of tragedy: we do not believe in it, or its themes or characters. The Shakespearean drama is an exception; these plays are tolerated for their poetical or historical or educational merits, and they have (it is popularly thought) little to do with real life.

There is a debased form of tragedy called melodrama, which was one of the most popular types of play in the Victorian period. It is a type of play in which good and evil are in conflict and in which good triumphs. Melodrama is a falsification of life, not its elevation, but life made absurd. It is unreal; but its unreality belongs to the realm of nonsense. It is not now popular on the stage, but is to be seen in full vigour on the films.

Though the present age has no tragic drama, I look for tragedy to come again. When we have a tragic poet who can speak the word that we must hear, we shall listen. He must speak our language, not that of a dead age, and his characters must be people we can recognize in situations that we know. Our own tragic poet will make tragic

Strindberg whenever he gets a chance. Fortunately there is the poet Shakespeare, and a grounding in Shakespearean tragedy is an essential element in the training of every actor.

Amateurs must not neglect tragedy. They should do it for their own pleasure and instruction, no matter what their audience may say. No



*Photo by Scott & Wilkinson, Cambridge*

"THE CARTHAGINIAN," PRODUCED AT THE CAMBRIDGE FESTIVAL THEATRE

drama out of our own crisis. When he does that I have no doubt that he will be listened to. So that it is of no use to blame the age or the theatre because there is no tragedy. When the dramatist comes he will be acknowledged.

I have referred to the tragic poet. We must bear in mind that tragic drama is poetry. Comedy is prose, because it is the product of reason. Tragedy is poetry, because it is the product of emotion. There will be no tragic drama until poetry returns to the stage.

The actor, however, cannot wait for the poet. He must train himself in playing tragic drama to be fit for comedy or for gaining even the smallest mastery over the stage. So whether the audience likes it or not, he must act the present-day tragedies of John Masefield and Gordon Bottomley and

amateur actor is worth his salt who has not had practice in tragedy. If he cannot get the opportunity of playing in tragedy he must practise by himself. Every serious actor does a certain amount of daily practice, and the amateur will be well advised to practise tragic parts. Let him take any tragic part and in, say, half an hour's practice every day get to know what it contains and try himself in it. He will find that there is plenty in any tragic character upon which his imagination can work, and if he takes the part line by line, working at it, with some degree of concentration, he will gain a marked extension of knowledge of his art. I do not say that playing by oneself is the same thing as acting a part before an audience; but steady private practice is the means by which groundwork can be established.

The first requisite in tragedy is power. Tragic acting calls for power of voice, decision and boldness in gesture and movement. I do not regard tragic acting as more difficult than comedy, providing there is actual power available; but without power the actor will fail. The power is primarily physical, and specifically of the voice.

When producing tragic plays the producer must listen. He must get the right quality of speech. He must be able to judge what his players are capable of, because as tragedy depends so much upon emotion he can never get the full effect of what the actors will do until they perform before an audience. All the same, he must urge them



A SCENE FROM "RICHARD III"

*Photo by Scott & Wilkinson, Cambridge*

"The whole secret is in the voice," says Stanislavsky. Almost every handicap can be overcome by the actor if he has the voice. There must be depth, infinite power of expression, and absolute control. No actor can attempt tragedy without a long period of vocal study, and, as tragic acting is the basis of all acting, my point is made that the student must prepare for tragic acting if he is to be an actor at all, which means that he must start with the voice. It is not my business to say how the voice should be trained, but to point out the necessity of such training. A small natural voice can be made into a melodious organ of sound by right training, which means the observance of a few simple rules and incessant practice. I emphasize practice: there is no art without it.

in rehearsal to use their powers as fully as possible. The actors must not rely upon the audience to give them the emotional impetus that they need. They must be able to create it for themselves. What the actor does he must do consciously as much in tragedy as in any other form of play, and that requires him to prepare beforehand. The actor must create the part imaginatively before he meets the audience, and, having created it, he must rehearse it in cold blood before the unimpassioned eye of the producer. Not until an actor can do that has he any mastery of his art.

In tragic playing there must be restraint, though there should be the appearance of abandon. Indeed, the actor must render all that he has; but he must do it under control. This control

is that of the artistic consciousness: it is not rational, but the result of vision. The actor must see the person he is playing and the emotion he is feeling, and project it through himself. The actor does not identify himself with Hamlet or Lear; he is the instrument; his body, voice, and personality are played upon by the character, which he has himself imaginatively recreated out of the poet's conception. That is why restraint is possible. In acting passion, the actor is not as a man in a rage with his reason coldly checking him: that is not acting but devilish. The restraint of the actor is the product of his own integrity and the result of practice.

Stillness, poise, and repose must be studied in production. Every movement must have significance. Action must be taken out of the realm of realism. Tragedy is not on the level of actual life, but above it. No actual life is tragic in its natural aspects. Tragedy is life lifted up and seen from the point of view of eternity: what is painful or sordid in it being removed and only the eternal meaning remaining. The producer must remember this, and though tragedy may have the form of realism, as, for instance, in Strindberg's *The Father*, he must not treat it realistically. The object of tragedy is to fill the spectator with joy.

Tragic acting is symbolic, which means that its form is all important. There is inner fire and meaning; but the form expresses more than it

appears to say. All true acting, as I have said, is the work of the imagination; the art comes in the making of its form. In tragedy there is depth of emotion conveyed by means of voice and movement, and everything depends upon the form the actor produces. Every tone of his voice, every gesture, must represent inner meaning. What the producer has to do is to establish this form, and he does it not merely by careful rehearsal of what the principal actors do, but by getting significance out of every part. In no kind of play is the importance of minor parts so great. Every scene contributes to the result, and the climax is built up from the very opening of the play.

Staging in tragedy must be simplified as far as possible. Observe severity, that is the rule. Only in costume should there be any richness or exuberance.

In staging tragedy remember that its characteristic is depth. Tragedy is the third dimension of the stage. Therefore the setting must not seem shallow, but must suggest space, mystery, and the illimitable. Its simplicity must be on the grand scale. Do not attempt to be realistic in anything. There is a temptation in tragedy to keep the stage dark, and certainly darkness must be used, for shadows convey the sense of the unknown; but do not keep the actors in darkness. What they do must be seen clearly as much in tragedy as in any other play.



## THE CASE FOR MODELS

By HAL D. STEWART

Author of "*Rizzio's Boots*," "*The Blind Eye*," etc.

AFTER the ground plan of a set has been decided, there are two methods of demonstrating the design. You may make a sketch in perspective, or you may make a model of the set in cardboard. The latter method has many advantages.

In the first place, it gives an infinitely more satisfactory idea of your requirements for the finished set than is possible with any two dimensional drawings. It is probably for this reason that it is the method that is now generally employed in the professional theatre.

The coloured plate facing page 402 shows two excellent sketches for stage settings. Both are good sketches, yet neither gives any real idea of the set that was ultimately produced. This is shown to some extent by comparing the first sketch with Plate I, which is a photograph of the set as it was used in the production. As a matter of fact this particular set was not made from a sketch, but from a model by Miss Carlier for the Crescent Theatre's production in Birmingham, March, 1933.

I have been unable to obtain a photograph of the setting used in *Blood Royal*. The sketch was designed by Gordon R. Archibald for the Torch Theatre Club's production in the Athenaeum Theatre, Glasgow, January, 1933. In this case also the finished article was a great deal more artistic and arresting than the sketch suggests. One reason for this is that this production depended to a great extent on skilful and artistic lighting. In addition to the obvious advantages of a three dimensional model, there is an added one that it is possible to light it in approximately the same way as the stage will itself be lit. It is almost impossible to show the effect of lighting in a sketch with any degree of accuracy.

The second great advantage which a model possesses is that comparatively little skill in drawing or painting is necessary to produce quite satisfactory results. To draw a sketch of a stage setting, which is to be of any practical value, one must be able to draw at least reasonably well, and

while many amateur dramatic societies could probably find someone with the necessary qualifications, it often happens that there may be a member interested in design, who has a flair for this, and an eye for colour, without the ability to draw.

Thirdly, the making of models is a most

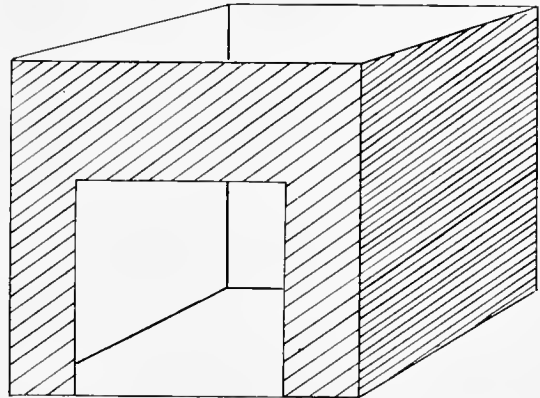


FIG. 1

fascinating pursuit, and the models themselves can be used in many different ways.

Their principal use is, of course, as models, that is, as miniatures from which the actual set will be built. In addition, however, they are useful for showing the cast before rehearsals start what the stage will look like. Few societies have an opportunity to rehearse on their stage until the dress rehearsal, and unless the producer has unusual descriptive powers, it is difficult for them to visualize with any accuracy the scene in which they are to play. If they are shown a model, however, they will form a correct impression at once, and they will not have to play in strange surroundings at the dress rehearsal.

Further, the model may be used for publicity and advertisement purposes.

Before starting to make your model, it is necessary to have a model theatre in which to display it when it is finished. The model stage should have the same proportions as the stage that

you will use. If the model is made accurately to scale the size of the scale is not of great importance. Do not, however, make your model too small, or you will find your work is more difficult than it need be. On the other hand, do not make

surrounding part black, leaving the stage itself white (Fig. 2). You will thus obviate making use of a part of the stage that is not there! You will also be able to check the dimensions of the model when you come to put it in the box.



FIG. 2

it cumbersome. Do not choose a scale that carpenters will find complicated. An inch to a foot is a useful scale, and usually makes a finished model of a convenient size.

The model theatre may be simple or elaborate. Probably the simplest method of any is to use a

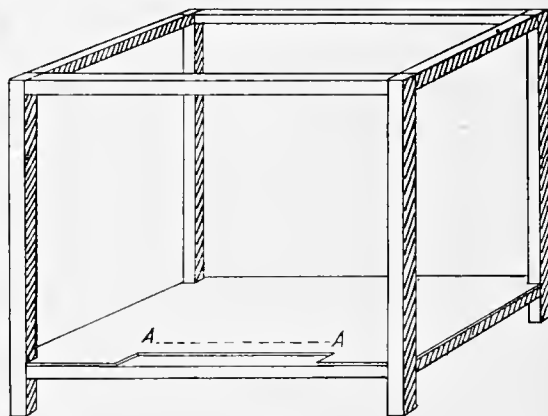


FIG. 4

The principal drawback of the cardboard box is that it is difficult to show the lighting that is to be used. The best and easiest way to illuminate the model is to paint the inside of the lid white, and to cut in the middle a circular hole, through which an ordinary electric lamp with a reflector

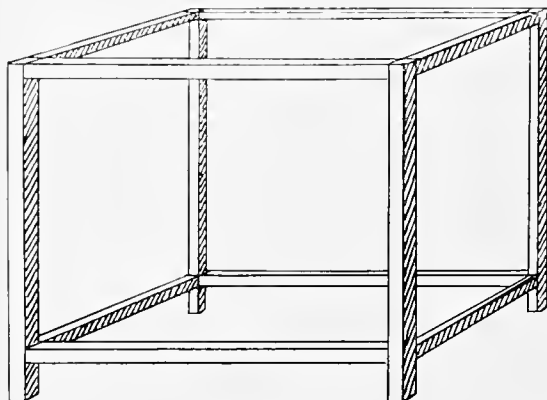


FIG. 3

square hat box, and, on one side, to cut out the proscenium opening, as shown in Fig. 1. The size of the actual box is not important, provided that the opening is correct to scale, in each direction. Next, mark off, on the bottom of the box, the ground plan of the stage. Then paint the

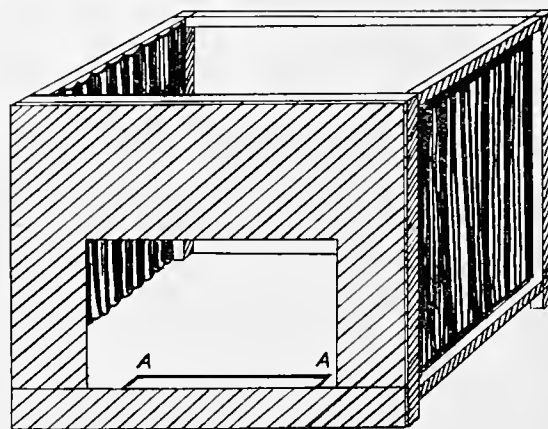


FIG. 5

can be hung. The box should be deep enough to allow you to hang the lamp so that the bulb is not seen. This method illuminates the model but it does not give an idea of how the finished set will look under the proper stage lighting.

Apart from the question of lighting, the

cardboard box is all that is really required, but if you propose to make models at all frequently, or to use them, as I have suggested, for publicity and advertisement purposes, then something rather more substantial is desirable.

Fig. 3 shows the first step that has to be taken in the construction of a model theatre that will stand wear and tear. It is easy to make, and it embodies all essentials. It consists of a framework of square upright posts, held together, top and bottom, by cross pieces of the same dimensions, the whole forming the framework of a box. Notice that the lateral pieces at the bottom do not come to the foot of the box, but are nailed some inches from the bottom of the uprights. The lateral pieces should be cut short in order to come within the uprights to which they are nailed. A carpenter would, of course, joint these but to do so is not really necessary.

Fig. 4 shows the next process. A sheet of thin plywood is cut so that it can rest on the lower part of the frame, to which it may be either glued or nailed. The reason for the legs at the foot is now seen—there must be space underneath the stage if miniature footlights are to be used, and the opening *A* is the trough to take these. If your stage has trapdoors, these should be cut in the plywood before it is fitted to the frame.

Next, the proscenium (Fig. 5) is cut out of plywood, and nailed or glued to the front of the box, and the sides are covered by miniature curtains of black velvet to enclose the light.

This theatre may, of course, be illuminated by means of a single electric bulb, but a much better method is to use strip lights for footlights and battens. These strip lights are tubular in shape, and can be obtained about eight inches in length. By placing them where the battens themselves would come, and by covering them with the appropriate coloured media, you can get a fair approximation of the actual stage lighting.

When installing the lighting system in your model, you should observe the same principle as in the construction of the theatre itself; that is to say, you should attempt to reproduce in miniature the actual lighting that you will use.

It is not necessary, however, to reproduce the lighting system, although this can be done. It would be possible to have miniature lighting

battens with the same number of circuits as in your theatre and a switchboard by means of which each circuit could be separately controlled. This would not only be difficult but also extremely expensive. By using strip lights instead of battens, you can get as good results as by the more elaborate and expensive method.

Each strip should be connected to a resistance so that the amount of light can be regulated. The required colour is obtained by covering the strip with an ordinary gelatine medium, and if it is proposed to use circuits of different colours in the same batten you can demonstrate the effect of this by having media of these various colours on your strip. If the lighting in your theatre is sectional, that is to say, if all the lights on the prompt side of a batten can be switched off, leaving those on the O.P. side on, use two short strips instead of one long one.

A strip light should also be used for the footlights in exactly the same way. Care should be taken here to see that it is placed so that the light will strike the model stage at the same angle as the footlights do in the actual theatre.

A piece of tin, or other bright metal, should be used as a reflector behind all lights.

These strip lights have the great advantage that they can be plugged into any ordinary domestic lighting circuit. Plugging avoids the necessity for batteries that require constant renewal or recharging.

Batteries are necessary, however, when using miniature spots and floods, which play an important part in modern stage lighting. It is probably simplest to use electric torches or low voltage bulbs connected to an accumulator or dry battery.

In the case of floods, a bulb and reflector are necessary. It is a fairly simple matter to arrange these where required, and to take the current from a dry battery elsewhere. The battery can usually be kept under the stage.

A spot is rather different. The easiest thing to use is a focusing torch. The beam can then be directed where required.

The designer may learn a great deal from watching the effect of spots on a model. At the same time, however, it must be remembered that, where lighting is concerned, the model theatre gives only an approximation. The effect on the

actual stage will probably be similar, but not necessarily the same. One reason for this is that it is impossible to scale down the lighting in the same way that you can scale down the set.

The designer will learn more from watching the effect of different coloured lights. A well lit model is a real help. In a costume play, or in

can be held under the lights of the model theatre, and thus much information can be gained.

When the model is wanted for display purposes in a shop window it is rarely worth while to use complicated lighting. The main thing is that the model should be brightly lit so that it will attract attention. For this purpose, therefore, chose a



PLATE I

*By kind permission of The Crescent Theatre, Birmingham*

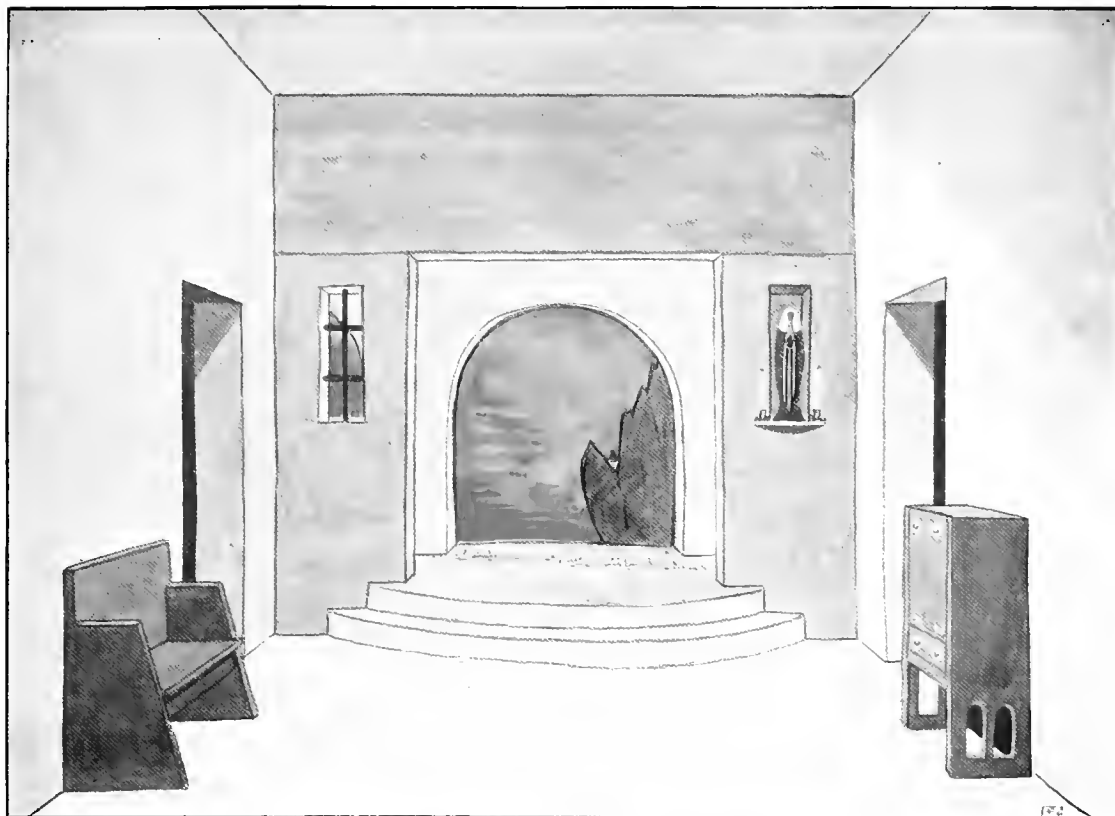
PHOTOGRAPH OF THE ACTUAL SETTING USED BY THE CRESCENT THEATRE, BIRMINGHAM, IN  
THE PRODUCTION OF "LA MALQUERIDA"

Designed by Gwen Carlier

any play where the colour scheme of the dresses is likely to play an important part, the model should be used to ascertain the effect of the lighting. Lighting that suits a set admirably has frequently to be altered because its effect on a particular dress is unsuitable. Patterns of the materials from which the dresses are to be made

scene that lends itself to bright lighting, and dispense with spots or any lighting that cannot be taken from the mains.

Remember also that the model theatre will be twice as effective if you can persuade the proprietor of the shop to turn out any other lights in the window where the model is exhibited.



SKETCH FOR THE SETTING OF "LA MALQUERIDA"



SKETCH FOR THE SETTING OF "BLOOD ROYAL" BY JAMES KEITH



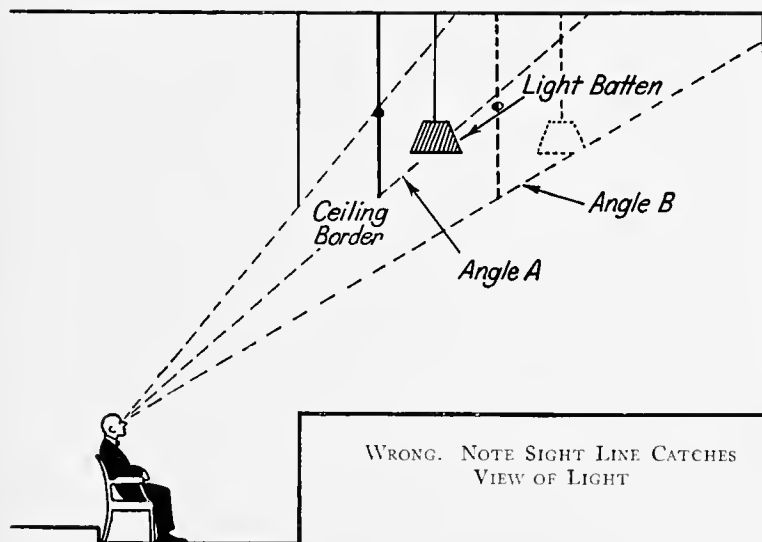
# TRIANGULATION AND SCENERY

By F. E. DORAN

*Secretary, Manchester Playgoers' Club*

A GOOD producer will always remember that he is really an artist-workman with two sets of tools to work with, one set the living actors, the other the scenery or inanimate actors, using actor in this case as something presenting an illusion. His living actor may help him out at times, but he is at the mercy of his scenery,

real horizontal ceiling with a candelabra hanging from the centre, but if Victorian drama in period sets is being produced they will have to be used, and they are also necessary in small halls where changes from interior to exterior sets do not allow of much room for manipulating a flat ceiling. The farther back stage we go, the less is the angle *A*, as is shown by the dotted back batten giving angle *B*. The height of these flies should be as high as possible, particularly in open-air scenes, so that the audience get as much freedom of view as possible. There are exceptions: a prison scene, for example, in which a compressed atmosphere and small spaces are to be suggested, but, generally speaking, spaciousness is to be aimed at, and this is helped by a minimum of top hamper.



which will betray incompetence and slipshod methods.

A frequent and unnecessary fault is to disclose "behind the scenes" by not having the units of a scene properly set together. All illusion is spoilt if the edges of the flats do not fit together with neatness and obscurity. The flies or ceiling pieces used for masking top battens of lighting must be at the right height so that the spectator in the front row of the stalls cannot see "how it is done."

The diagram at once demonstrates the fault and gives a method of ascertaining in advance how high the fly piece or the batten should be. It will be seen that a complete mask is effected by dropping the fly very little.

Modern producers have eliminated ceiling pieces, as shown in the diagram for the effect of a

be the minimum necessary to produce the illusion required. The last set of wings should be in such a position that the edges of the backcloths are not exposed to people on the flanks of the front rows. It will be observed in the diagram that each wing presents a double problem. (See Fig. 1 on page 404.)

The wing *A* must project sufficiently far on to the stage to prevent a spectator at the extreme right of the theatre from seeing beyond the inner edge of the wing *B* into the off-stage area. The producer must remember that it is one thing to design your illusion, another to present it to perfection, and ragged details do more to undermine good foundations than any other factor.

The next point to observe is that in interiors

the frieze and the ceiling flies should match so as to present an appearance of continuity.

In the diagram, Fig. 2, the ceiling cloth is

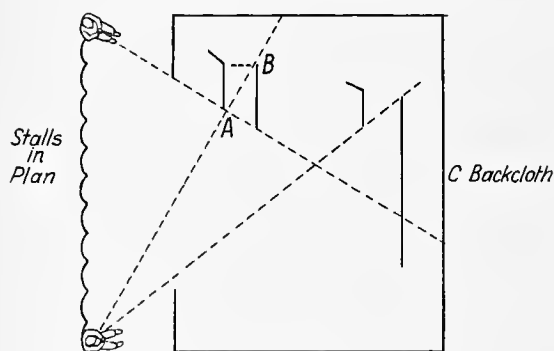


FIG. 1

resting on the top edges of the scenery, hanging quite flat and in order, not as in Fig. 3, where the stone top is all creased and untidy because it has been dropped too far. If a cloth has to be dropped down into the set itself then it should go into one of the joins where flat is joined to flat, Fig. 3A.

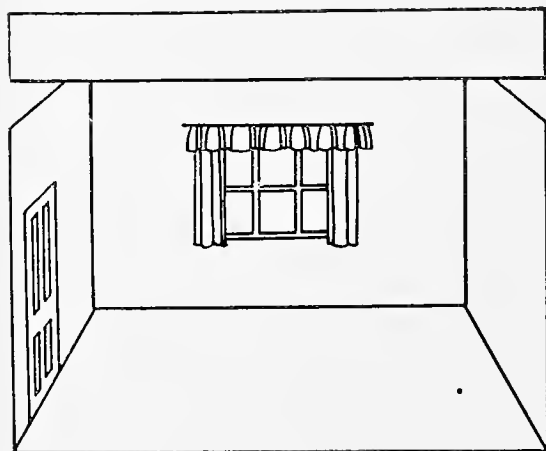


FIG. 2

In exteriors, if the cloth is one of foliage, carrying the idea of an arching tree, care should be taken to match a bough or spring of a branch so that the tree on the wing is apparently arching over, and is not truncated all down one side, with healthy twigs growing from nothing.

With cycloramic settings this problem is abol-

ished, and I strongly advise all producers to try to fix up some sort of cyclorama for outside scenes. There is a reaction against the cyclorama in

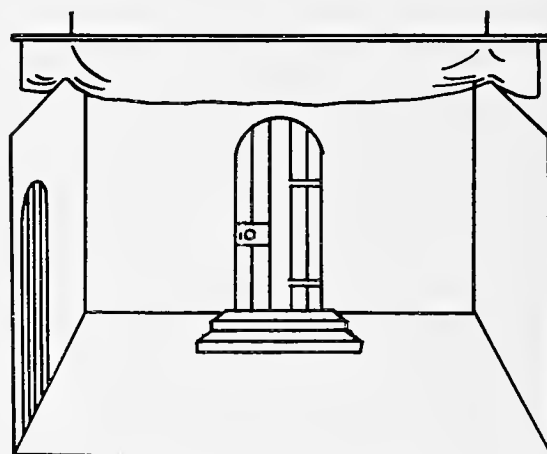


FIG. 3

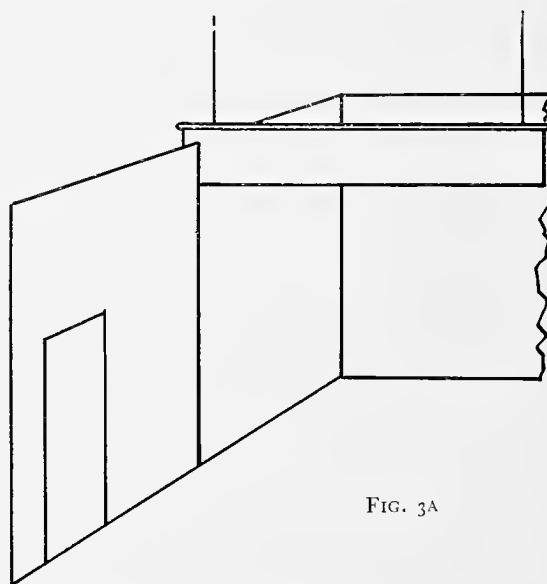


FIG. 3A

some Repertory Theatres, but I find it difficult to agree with this opposition.

The cyclorama relies for its effects more on light than on paint. It is really painting with light. With the old scenery the backcloth was a great trouble; its spires and rolling prospects seldom convinced the eye, though I have known of some fine effects from the brushes of



Freemantle, and also when Sir Herbert Tree and Sir Henry Irving mounted a play with lavish disregard of simplicity. But, generally speaking, and

tion is to make a surface capable of reflecting any coloured light projected on its surface. The colour of this ground is usually a neutral grey, light in

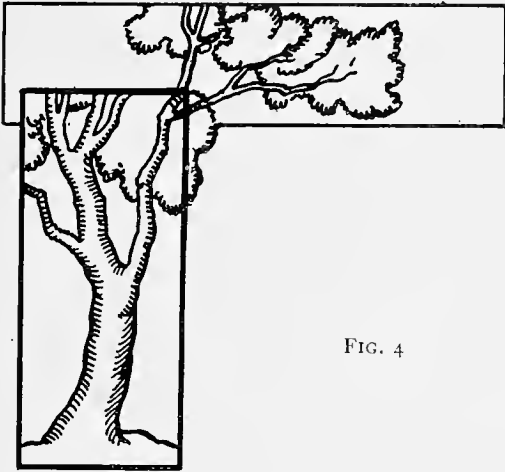


FIG. 4

particularly with the amateur, the backcloth was unsuccessful. Usually it was too near the foremost spectators to preserve the illusion, and it was largely with the eye of faith that the Piazza of

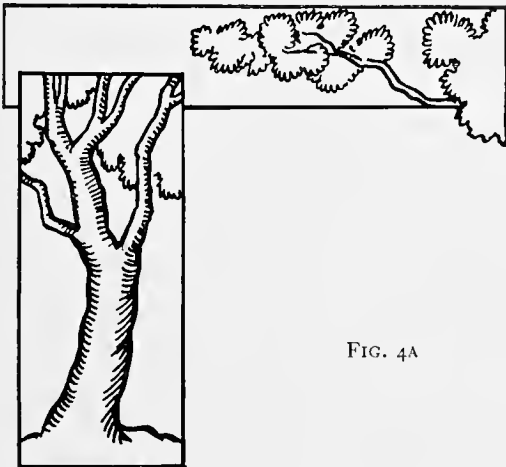


FIG. 4A

St. Mark's or the distant view of Rome ever got beyond the mental fact of canvas and paint.

The cyclorama gives a fine atmospheric effect, as though the imagined scene was drenched in colour, as indeed it is.

The essential principle of cycloramic lighting is utilized in many ways, but, in brief, the applica-

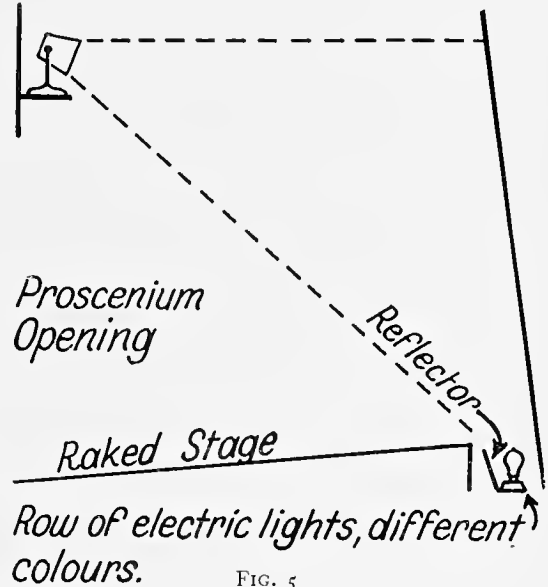


FIG. 5

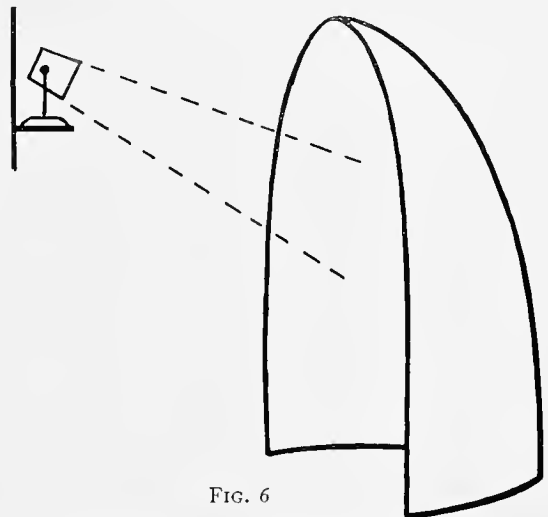


FIG. 6

tone, though practice varies. I have seen successful colourings of ivory, whitewash white, or pale blue.

A good arrangement is shown in Fig. 5.

Over the proscenium arch there is a shelf or gallery, on which there are two or more flood-lights, with their beam directed on to a backcloth

or plaster surface. The batten on the floor is a further supply of light, which can be complementary and supplementary to the main light. Suppose a twilight to moonlight effect is desired. If the floor batten is throwing up an amber glow and the projector is throwing blue, the base of the backcloth will show a sunset effect merging through green into the blue, and when the dimmer operates on the batten a gradual change will be effected until the whole sky is blue.

A cycloramic sky is very much more intense and beautiful in colour than painted cloths, and

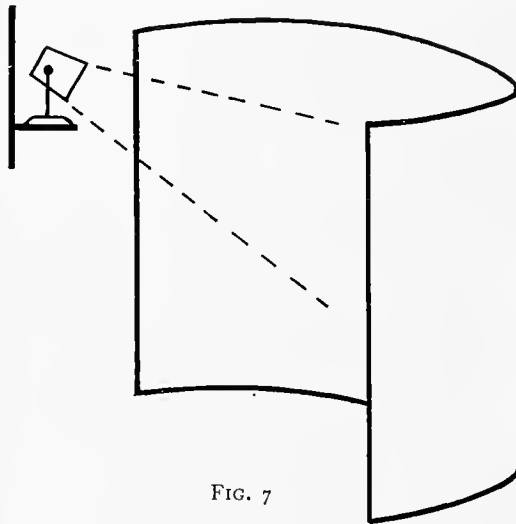


FIG. 7

the possible permutations on a full colour range are too many to describe. A producer, even with the most elementary knowledge of lighting, who cannot appreciate the possibilities of this system, should not be a producer.

Another cycloramic form comes from Germany and consists of a dome instead of a flat. This adds to the appearance of immensity (Fig. 6).

Another form is a plain, semicircular background (Fig. 7). Another of the simple designs is a board, movable backwards and forwards as desired (Fig. 8).

Sometimes the backing is perforated with small holes and a projector at the back gives the effect of stars.

There is also another method of presenting scenery. It did not get far, but I will mention it for its interest. It also was a German system, and

was a sort of magic-lantern method by which the painted scene was projected on to neutral cloths on the stage. It was expensive to install and found to have a limited application. It was an interesting method, however, as the scene was painted on to a slide and so was readily changed and lent itself to many excellent effects.

For practical purposes, and in particular for societies that have no permanent stage, the simple device of Fig. 8, with the projector working from the sides, is the most suitable.

The use of a cycloramic background calls for accessory scenery of a rather simple kind. The background being all sky, the background units of, say, a church, trees, bushes, etc., can be definitely silhouetted against a blue day or night sky,

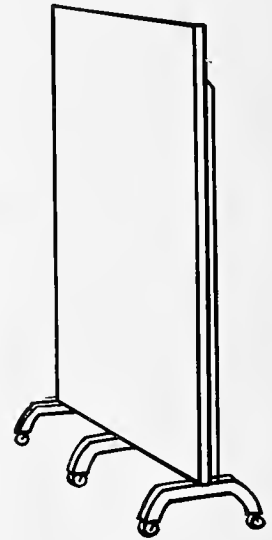


FIG. 8

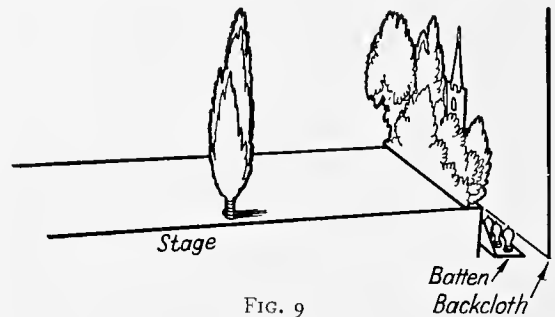


FIG. 9

and wings can be simple, self-supporting pieces without much rope and tackle (Fig. 9).

The cyclorama shows to advantage in exterior scenes, as there is no necessity to continue a piece of scenery to the flies; consequently the outlines are clear cut with no false perspectives. This method adds to the electrician's responsibilities, as a lot depends on the proper use and application of light.

## THE THREE HENRIES

By NEVIL TRUMAN

*Hon. Secretary, Nottingham Playgoers' Club*

**R**ICHARD of Bordeaux, who is sneered at by some historians, was wise beyond his time; he had a fixed policy of peace, and in this he gave his long-suffering people a welcome period of relief between the sword rattling Edward III and the equally militaristic Henry of Lancaster. During Richard's reign the people had time to cultivate the arts and culture of peace, and their costumes reflected this fact by their brilliance of colour and design, and by the new modes that were introduced. England, thrust back into the gloom of almost perpetual war under the three Henries, had little time to invent new fashions.

### DRESS

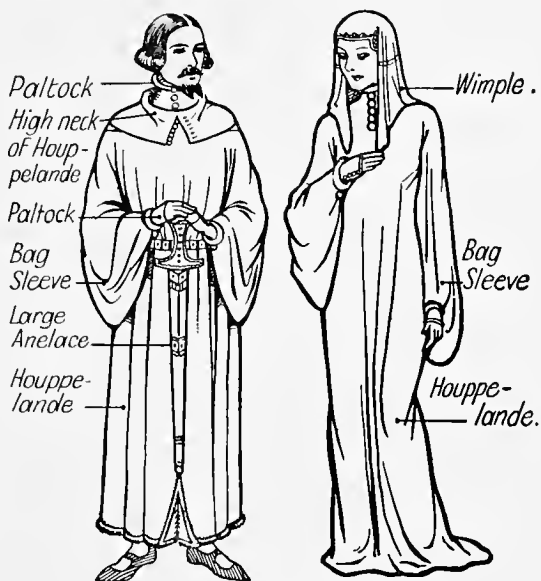
The *Cotehardie* (men and women) was becoming old-fashioned for men. It was a garment with a wide gored skirt, long tight sleeves, a hip belt, and it was laced at the back or made loose enough to slip on without lacing (though that mode was becoming out of date). It had a low neck and was parti-coloured.

The *Super Cotehardie* (women) was still the vogue, but was now fur-edged as well as fur-lined, the edging showing all round the garment from neck to waist, and at the back. It was a sleeveless coatee, with wide armholes and a cutaway front.

The *Houppelande* (men and women) could be worn long or short (the latter for young men). It had the same wide sleeves as before, the collar had become even higher, and was rolled over at the top. The main difference was that dagging was going out: it was retained only on the cuff, which was made wide enough to fold into regular pleats within the belt. In the later period the wide open sleeves were displaced by the bag sleeve, which was made full at the top to below the elbow, from where it gradually narrowed to the wrist, where it was gathered into a deep cuff by a button, or put into a simple wrist band.

The *Baldrick* (men) was another distinctive note. It was a long loop of cloth or leather, hung

with small bells all round. It was worn diagonally over the left shoulder, and fell to the right knee at front and back. In Henry VI's reign this gave way to an horizontal belt, which had small bells only across its front.



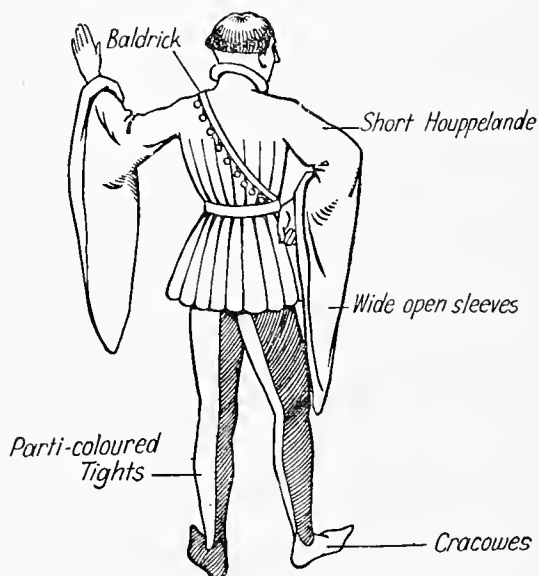
CIVILIANS 1400 (SILBROOK)

*Tights* (men) were parti-coloured.

*Shoes* also caught the parti-colour infection, and no decently dressed gallant dreamt of going about with two shoes that matched in colour. They had to agree with the shades of the rest of the costume. The tops were long enough to roll back to show the coloured lining, which had to agree with the general colour scheme. The long points continued until Henry VI's time, when they were replaced by shorter toes, on shoes laced at the sides. For bad weather the wooden clogs called *Poulaines* were still required. No difference from the previous period was made in the women's shoes.

The *Hair* (men) was now closely cropped, being completely shaved at the back of the neck

and over the ears—a fashion that may still be seen, somewhat modified, to-day. The older men wore pointed, rather Vandyk-like, beards, but these had two curled points instead of the single one we recognize as the true Vandyk. The women's hair was only seen through the gold net bags or cauls, and often little enough showed then if a



A YOUNG MAN (HENRY V)

heavy veil or other contraption was added. It was not just put into these cauls in any manner; contemporary pictures prove that it was carefully plaited before insertion into the net.

*Hats* were varied. We have the old *Turban* (men), which was extensively worn in the reigns of Henry IV and V. It was a round cloth crown with dagged ends overlapping the edge. It was a large, clumsy looking headgear, and the ragged end, which flapped about on top or at the side, gave an effect not unlike a cock's comb.

The *Roundlet* (men) was the distinctive Henry IV hat. It had a small stiffened rolling brim with a draped crown and a long streamer, which was broad, and hung from the crown right down the side of the body. It was so long that it could be looped up and fastened to the skirt by a brooch or clasp, though a more moderate version reached to the shoulder only.

The *Sugar-loaf* (men) was a brimless oval cap

and was popular under Henry V, specially for young men; it was a kind of elongated fez, often of white.

The *Hood* (men) was cut as of yore, but the face opening was now edged with fur, which indicated that the inside was also similarly lined. It was, when worn, usually shown over the head, and was not hung on the back of the shoulders.

The *Tall Hat* (men) had a turned up brim, which was cut out into squares.

The *Hood* (men and women) was the same as before, but it was usually worn by country folk and the poorer classes.

The *Hennin* (women) was a tall sugar-loaf or steeple shaped cone of buckram, covered with silk or brocade. The end was not yet sharply pointed, but was rounded, and the whole was covered with



ARCHITECT, 1440 (ROUEN)

a floating veil hanging over the back. The weight of this head-dress, which hung backwards, would have tipped it over but for the *Frontlet*, which was designed to balance it, and was made of a deep band of black velvet, rectangular shaped, covering the top of the head and falling on either side of the face to the shoulders. The *Hennin* was lined with thin steel or wire netting forming a close fitting cap for the head, and in this way it was kept on. Long floating *Veils* of white gauze were worn with all the head-dresses of this period

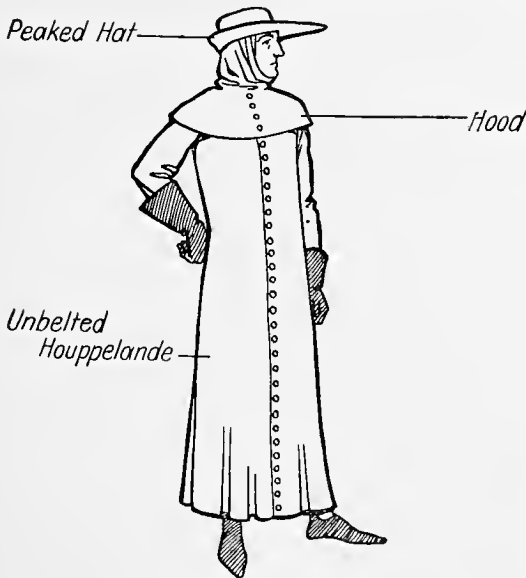
(save the hood) at will, but they were not needed for the horned and heart hats, though they were usually worn. The veil must accompany the hennin always.

The *Horned* head-dress had many varieties and modifications, but the earliest form consisted of two horns of wire foundation, sticking outwards and upwards from the sides of the head. The beginnings of this style were found in the *Reticulated* head-dress that was made from two cylinders in gold net worn on each side of the face. These cylinders were now elongated to an inordinate length and curved so that they resembled the Viking helmets of many centuries previously. The patterns on these horns were many. They were formed by plaiting and twisting the gold

bags and the horns when the horns were made of solid material.

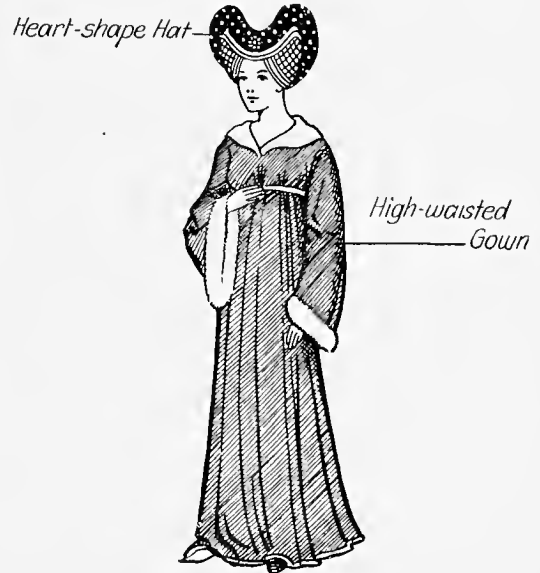
The *Crespine* was the metal connecting band over the forehead between the two side bags.

The next step was to alter the shape of the horns and to make them point directly upwards first instead of outwards. This *Forked* the hat



HENRY IV PERIOD

wire or by covering the horns with brocade and silk, and even twisting material round them. Another variety was to retain the *Reticulated* side bags and to place on top of them two side horns of curved wire from which hung the veil, the top of the wire being covered by the edge of the veil, which was brought over as a valance. A more solid effect was given by enlarging the crespine till it became a kind of toque placed over the veil, which was worn over the side bags. The toque was embroidered and jewelled, as were the side



HENRY VI PERIOD

and heightened it, and it was accompanied by a modified hennin, in which the round pointed end was cut off, leaving a short roll with a flat end. All were attached to the caul-cap on the head, the flat-ended short hennin pointing out at the back of the head, the cap covering it, and the horns standing above it. A veil was pinned at the front, where it met the centre of the forehead, and was drawn over the ends of the horns and floated down the back of the head, but the veil did not cover the pattern of the horns.

The *Heart shape* hat was immortalized by Sir John Tenniel in his drawings of the Duchess in *Alice in Wonderland*. The hair was padded and stuffed till it attained considerable height; it was placed in nets, and the curved part of the heart shape was covered with the veil.

The *Turban* was an enormously inflated caul, i.e. netted cap, into which the hair was placed,

## SUMMARY

## MEN

*Dress*

Cotehardie.

Houppelande—long or short, long wide sleeves, higher collar, regular pleats, geometrical designs.

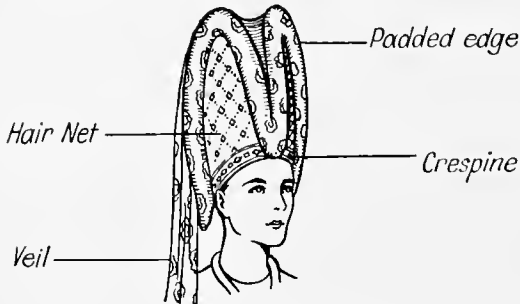


TURBAN (HENRY VI)

Houppelande with bag sleeve—leg of mutton shape, deep cuff or plain wrist band. Dagged cuff.

Cloik.

Baldrick—belt hung with small bells, worn diagonally over left shoulder.



FORKED HAT (1435)

Baldrick—belt with bells across front, worn horizontally (Henry VI).

*Legs*

Tights—parti-coloured.

*Feet*

Shoes—long pointed. Top turned back to show lining. Parti-coloured.

Shoes—shorter toes, laced at sides (Henry VI).

Poulaines—wooden clogs.

*Hair*

Short—cut close, shaved at back and over ears.

Beards—short, Vandyk shaped; but in two curls for older men.

*Hats*

Roundlet—small round with stiff rolling brim, draped crown, long broad streamer over side (Henry IV).

Turban—cloth crown, dagged ends overlap edge (Henry IV and V).

Sugar-loaf—brimless oval (Henry V).

Hood—fur-edged round face opening.

Tall—turned up brim cut in square scallops.



ROUNDLET

## WOMEN

*Dress*

Houppelande—as above.

Cotehardie and super cotehardie.

Mantle—as before, strings across chest.

High-waisted gown—long gored skirt, belt high up, trained, V-neck fur-edged.

*Feet*

Cracowes—slightly pointed, laced, buckled, or buttoned.

*Hair*

All concealed under the gold net cap.



HORNED HEAD-DRESS

*Hats*

Reticulated—netted side bags or side wings.

Hood—for country folk.

Hennin—sugar loaf, with frontlet and veil.

Horned—at sides with crespine and veil.

Forked—pointless roll back of head with horns upright above head, no frontlet.

Heart—heart shaped frame and veil.

Turban—inflated caul, no veil or frontlet.

Frontlet—black velvet strip hanging to shoulders either side of face.

## FOUNDATION BEARDS, ETC.

By ALFRED HARTOP

*Perruquier and Lecturer to Amateur Societies*

**A**LTHOUGH prepared crêpe-hair may be effectively used for close trimmed and short beards in general, it is not advisable to attempt to make long beards from it. Owing to its fineness, crêpe-hair is not sufficiently strong and resilient to be self-supporting. Therefore, a long beard will refract from its natural forward angle and swing with every movement of the jaw. It should be borne in mind that expression in speech results very much from the modulation of the lower lip; and that the rising and falling of the jaw, more especially in singing, add to the motion. I have seen a production in which a player in a serious rôle made the audience laugh because of a patriarchal type of beard, made up of white crêpe-hair, which sagged from the chin to rise and fall in rhythm with the spoken words.

Even for beards of moderate length, that is to say, not more than six inches long, it is an advantage to apply a stiffening agent during the preparation of the hair. Non-greasy hair fixing cream, a mucilage of gum tragacanth or gum arabic, gives the hair a more natural degree of rigidity.

To impregnate the hair a small quantity of cream should be smeared on the palms of the hands and the prepared switch of hair pressed between them. The fibres, whilst in a damp condition, should be separated by combing, and should be allowed to dry; the hair will then be substantially stronger. It is essential that the hair should be combed before drying, otherwise, the fibres will stick together.

When a beard of moderate length is mounted, it is advisable to make the under-chin piece from the strongest hair, as, by so doing, this piece will form a more rigid support for the front and side pieces, and, also, maintain the natural beard angle. Whatever type of beard is worn the naturally correct angle in relation to the face should be aimed at. Judgment will be assisted by obtaining a profile view in the mirror. If the beard is set too far back, the footlights will play on its surface and cause it to appear even still farther

back; if it is set too forward the footlights will cast a heavy shadow of it on to the face.

A common fault in mounting crêpe-hair pieces is to leave the edges standing off the face. To avoid this and to produce a naturally thinner hair line between the beard and the face, such edges should be thinned at the back in order to allow surface fibres to make proper contact with the gummed surface of the skin, and pressed flat to the face with a damp sponge. At the same time make certain that the beard area is perfectly free from grease. The edges can be touched up and made to appear thinner by painting fine lines with brown or grey, or with a soft pencil, to suggest the roots of hairs a little beyond the actual hair. Also, to facilitate the binding together of adjacent edges, as, for example, the points of an under-chin and a front piece, a few touches of spirit gum, or fixing cream, may be placed between the two pieces, and the fibres nearest the edges may be made to intermingle by manipulation with the fingers or a comb.

For a curly-haired beard of the negro type, the usual method of preparing crêpe-hair may be modified. In this case, use the hair direct from the rope in its crimped form, tease, and intersperse the fibres into an evenly felted mass, then mount on the face in as large pieces as are practicable, and trim to the desired shape. The best results are obtained by a liberal application of hair, no matter how closely it is trimmed later.

A shaggy, matted, or unkempt appearance can be given to a beard by applying fixing cream, and then deranging and sticking the hair together in appropriate parts.

To suggest stubble or a few days' growth of beard, apply spirit gum over the beard and moustache area, and evenly cover the gummed parts with finely cut hair. This method may be employed over the grease-paint foundation, which must be well powdered before applying the gum.

The best method of removing crêpe-hair moustaches and beards that have been stuck on

with spirit gum can now be explained. It is often worth while to preserve for subsequent use hair pieces that have taken time and patience in the

the gum is particularly obdurate it may be necessary to apply a little spirit. A small piece of cotton wool saturated with surgical spirit, or methyated spirit, and rubbed on the gummed parts will immediately remove the gum and clean the skin. Spirit is useful to kill grease and to prepare the skin for the application of spirit gum before mounting a moustache or beard; also, there is nothing better for softening and cleaning the gauze foundations of moustaches and beards that have been used a few times and become hard with old gum.



FIG. 17. THE WRITER AS "KING LEAR"  
Bradford Shakespearean Society  
Produced March, 1933

making. They should be pulled as gently as possible from the face in order to retain their shape. Cold cream or cocoa-butter is quite effective for counteracting the sticking properties of the gum, and should be well rubbed into the parts where spirit gum has been used, after as much hair as possible has been removed. When

pieces are affixed after other stages of the make-up have been completed and powdered.

When a player is fixing a beard, he should first temporarily place in position on the face the piece or pieces. The exact outline of the foundation edges should be indicated with a pencil mark. This will serve as a guide when the spirit

#### FOUNDATION BEARDS

For a bushy or long beard it is in all cases preferable to obtain one that has the hair woven or knotted on a permanent foundation of net or gauze, trimmed and dressed ready for fixing. These types of beards can, of course, be obtained from theatrical costumiers and wig makers. The use of foundation hair pieces, whether moustache, beard, or side whiskers, has many advantages; they achieve the most lifelike appearance that can be secured, are easily affixed, and can be used a considerable number of times if reasonable care is taken in removing them.

The best results are obtained when ready made hair



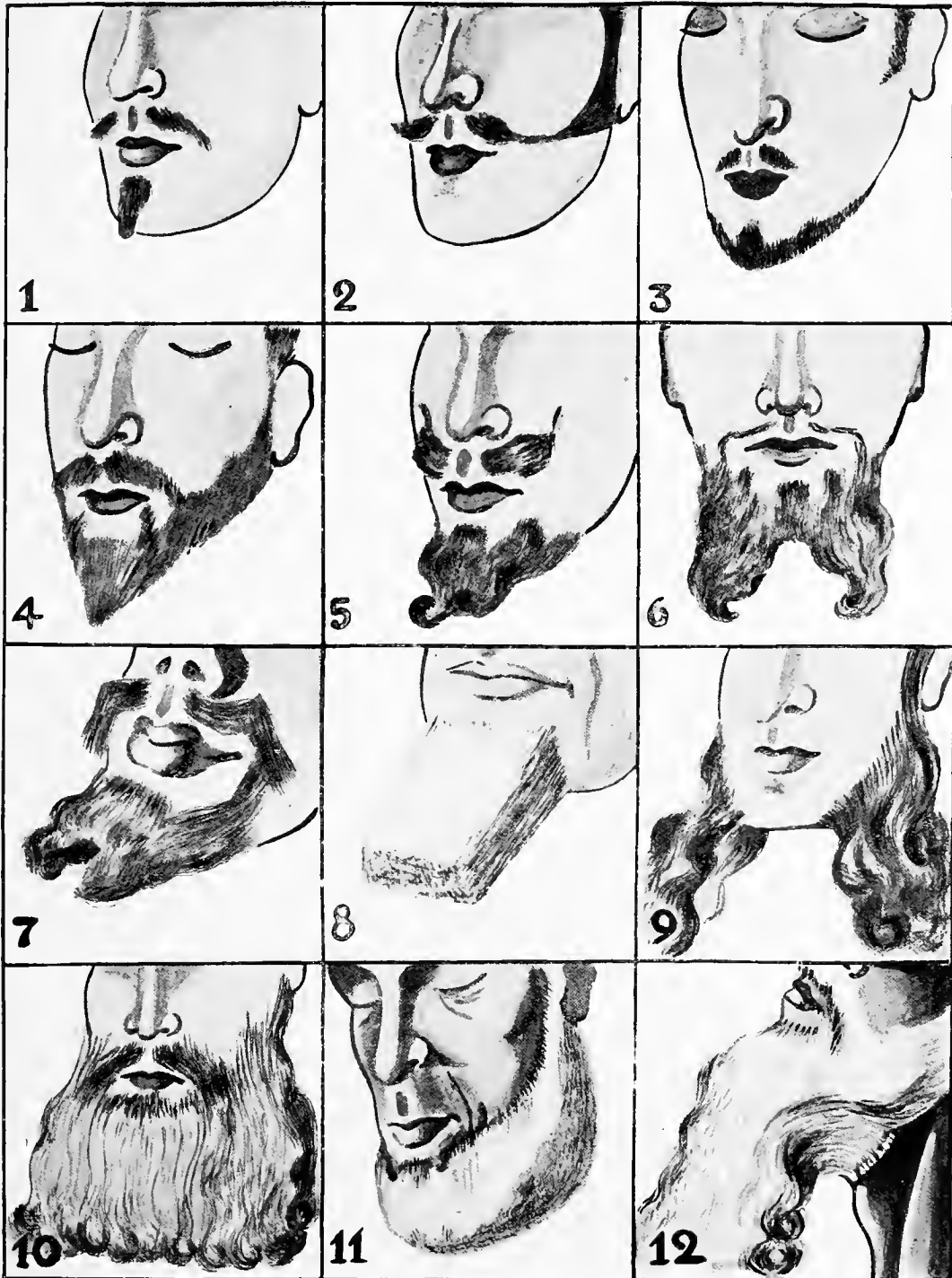


FIG. 18. CHARACTERISTIC TYPES OF BEARDS

gum is applied. All grease should be cleaned from the area with spirit, then the gum should be applied and allowed to dry before the beard is placed, otherwise the gauze will become saturated with gum and dry too hard. When once gauze foundations become boardy, subsequent fixing is more difficult, though they can generally be restored to a pliable condition by a thorough cleaning with spirit. When finally placing the beard give foremost attention to the dip which allows the chin to sink into the foundation to ensure that it sits snugly and in a central position on the chin. Also make sure that the angle is correct. Once the chin portion is properly fitted it is a relatively simple matter to fix the sides. A slight space should be left in front of the ears; then the sides should be pressed and held in position with a damp sponge until they have properly adhered. Take care that foundation edges, both above and under the chin, are firmly gummed down, for often a small gap left unstuck will cause an edge to rip from the face to a considerable extent when the jaw is moved. It is probable that the edges of the beard, especially those on the cheek, will present unnatural and

hard lines that will need to be softened. Softening can be done by marking short lines on the face along the line of the edges with a soft lead pencil or with water colour. Another method is to paint along the edge with spirit gum and to dab over with short cuttings of crêpe-hair.

Heavy foundation beards are sometimes equipped with tapes at the top. These are intended to be tied over the head in order to give additional support, and to relieve the drag on the skin that would result if the beard was only gummed on. Obviously, tapes can be employed only when a wig is worn in conjunction with the beard. When they cannot be entirely dispensed with, avoid tying them too tightly, or they may cause pain on the scalp when pressure is increased by movement of the jaw or head.

As a safeguard it is best to remove the tapes and to substitute a piece of elastic about half an inch wide.

Fig. 17 illustrates the combined use of foundation hair pieces and wig.

Fig. 18 provides a few adaptable ideas for characteristic types of beards.

## LIGHTING APPARATUS: DIMMERS

By C. HAROLD RIDGE, A.R.S.M., D.I.C., and F. S. ALDRED, A.M.Inst.C.E.

*Consulting Engineers*

THE actual assembly of the "Stelmar" Lantern is shown in Fig. 32. The reflectors are made of metal spun to exact templates, after which they are chromium-plated and

tates sharp and intense pin-spotting. A plano-convex lens is shown mounted in front, in a sliding tube, to give adjustment for focusing purposes and to ensure evenness of light in the beam.

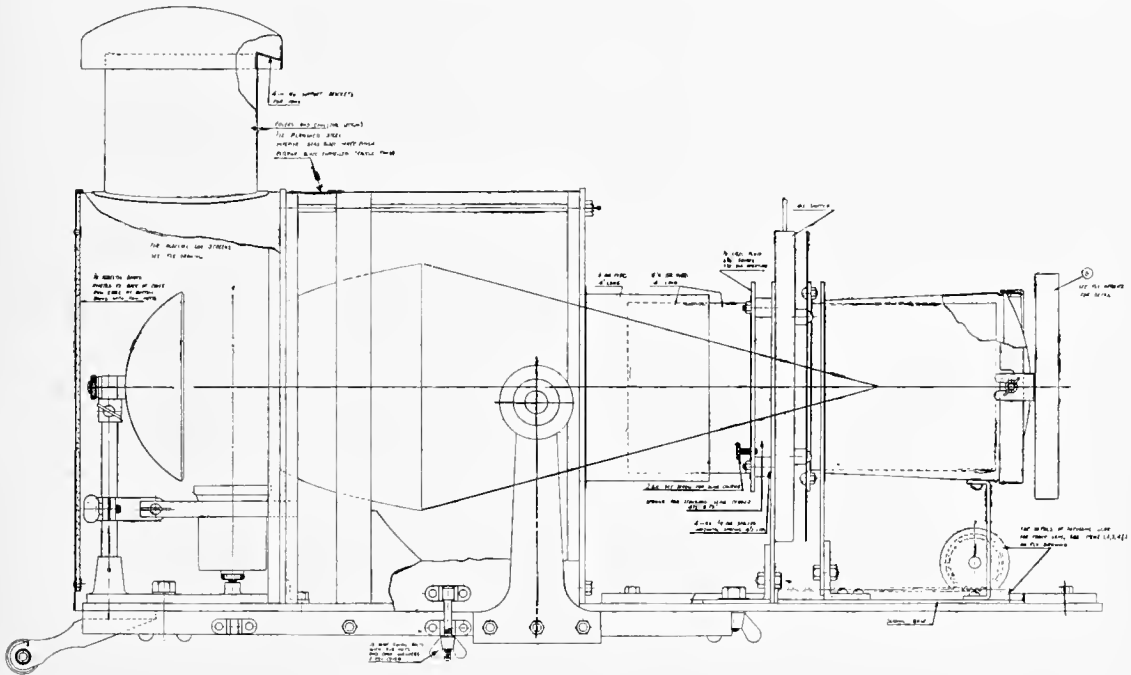


FIG. 32

mounted in the housing. In front of the housing will be seen the "gate," where Iris or Barndoor shutters are placed as desired. In this position, too, any masks, cut-outs, stencils, or coloured slides can be inserted, and they will give a fairly sharp image when projected. The masking, in actuality, is excellent, but the lantern cannot, as shown, be used as a magic lantern for focused images. Coloured slides must be of heat-resisting material, although they will not be located actually at the focal plane, where there is naturally an intense concentration of heat. The "gate" can be moved backwards and forwards along the axis, and if it is used at or near the focal point it facili-

Gelatine colour mediums when used are generally placed in front of this lens.

It must be realized that this Lantern is of fixed focus, and that the front lens must be changed to alter fundamentally the angle of the beam. A widespread flood of extremely uniform intensity is obtainable by substituting a (negative) concave lens for the normal plano-convex (positive) front lens. In practice, a lens is fitted for the largest spread required and for smaller beams the diaphragm or shutters are operated in the "gate." The illumination efficiency is such that this fixed focus arrangement works well.

"Stelmar" Incandescent Lanterns are suitable

where front-of-house arc lanterns have hitherto been used, and as they do not need constant attention they are often put into the ceilings of auditoriums or concealed in balcony fronts. They have been used for long throws in such theatres as the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Stratford on Avon. They are invaluable where arc lamps and operators are undesirable, and they reduce current consumption to about one-third, or, alternatively, increase the illumination in intensity. Such a lantern is far too big to be used on spot-battens.

Focus lanterns without lenses, but using parabolic mirrors instead, have been used in theatres, either instead of footlights or supplementary to them, to give soft-edge beams of light from auditorium positions. A restricted adjustment can be made in the angle of the beam. These lanterns are used in the studio and for open-air work. "Phantom" beams do not matter so much in the studio, and they stand open-air conditions better than lens units. In fact the bare lamp distribution can frequently be allowed to take care of itself, and the reflector be adjusted to intensify the centre of the beam. In the theatre, the bare lamp distribution is (rather inefficiently) damped out either by a metal disc or by fitting a hood of concentric metal rings, as in the case of the acting area lanterns. A more efficient method is to redirect the rays emanating from the front of the lamp on to the parabolic reflector by using a spherical mirror instead of the metal disc.

### DIMMERS

It has been said that the value of the introduction of gas lighting in the theatre was due as much to the possibility of being able to regulate and control its light intensity as to its greater illuminating power. Its use enabled auditoriums to be darkened during stage action, and it was found that controlled darkness and shadow on the stage were as important as light in obtaining certain effects.

The ease of gas-lighting control, by opening and closing valves, is the only advantage it has over electricity; it was not until means had been devised of controlling the intensity of electric lighting that it was able to supersede gas as an illuminant. Such devices are called dimmers, and they are a most important part of the stage instal-

lation. It has been shown how modern lighting apparatus, fitted with scientifically designed lenses and reflectors, is capable of directing light as required, but this alone is not sufficient, and it is essential that the intensity of light from the different lanterns in use should be capable of variation to produce balance and to build up a definite distribution of light and shade, giving form and interest to the elements on the stage. The operation of the dimmers gives this balance of intensities, differences of emphasis, the production of shadows or their elimination, and the subtle changes of colour, and also raises stage lighting from a craft to an art form.

The type of dimmer that is principally used to-day is a resistance connected in series with the lamps that it controls. It is so arranged that its resistance value can be altered, or it can be completely cut out of the circuit, as desired.

The lumen output of an electric incandescent lamp varies as the voltage applied to its terminals varies, but by no means in the same proportion, the lumen output falling at a much greater rate than the fall in voltage. The following table gives approximately the percentage output compared with the percentage value of the normal voltage when applied to a modern incandescent gas-filled lamp. The third column is added to show how the percentage ohmic resistance of the lamp filament itself varies.

Per cent voltage	Per cent Lumen output	Per cent Ohmic Resistance of lamp
100	100.0	100.0
95	83.5	98.0
90	68.5	96.5
80	44.0	91.5
70	28.5	86.0
60	18.0	80.5
50	10.5	75.0
40	5.5	68.5
30	2.0	61.0
20	1.0	51.0
10	0.35	37.0

The table clearly indicates the rapid loss in output, and shows that at about 20 per cent of normal voltage the lamp is practically out, except for a dull glowing of the filament.

We are now in a position to consider the effect

of a variable resistance in a lamp circuit shown diagrammatically in Fig. 33, in which  $L$  is a lamp and  $R$  a resistance fitted with a movable contact capable of making contact at different points on the resistance  $R$ . When the contact is at the position marked  $C$  the full voltage is across the lamp, and it therefore gives its full lumen output. Assume that contact  $C$  has been moved back to position  $C'$  so that all the resistance  $R$  is now in circuit: there is no longer full voltage across the lamp, for some of it is expended or absorbed in sending the current in the circuit against the resistance  $R$ . By placing the contact at different positions between  $C$  and  $C'$  the amount of resistance in circuit is varied, resulting in alterations in the number of volts absorbed and variations in the voltage at the lamp terminals, with consequent variation in the lumen output as shown in the table.

The total resistance in the circuit, neglecting that of the connecting cables, is, of course, the resistance of the lamp itself plus the resistance of the dimmer  $R$ . From the table we see that variation in the voltage at the lamp causes variation in its resistance; therefore when the normal lamp resistance is calculated, the table gives the means of calculating its resistance at voltages other than the normal. It should be noted that alteration in the lamp resistance causes the value of the current to vary in the circuit.

An example will show how to calculate the external resistance that is required to dim a lamp to a determined point, say 10 per cent of normal voltage. Take a 200 volt, 1000 watt gas-filled lamp; as watts are the product of volts and amperes, the current flowing through the lamp at normal voltage will be  $1000 \div 200 = 5$  amperes. By Ohm's Law, the normal lamp resistance will be  $200 \div 5 = 40$  ohms. From the table we find that at 10 per cent normal voltage the lamp resistance will be 37 per cent of its normal resistance, or 37 per cent of  $40 = 14.8$  ohms. Ten per cent normal voltage is 20 volts; therefore the current passing through the lamp will be  $20 \div 14.8 = 1.35$  amps. The external resistance is required to absorb 180 volts when 1.35 amperes is flowing through it, and again by Ohm's Law its value must be  $180 \div 1.35 = 133.3$  ohms. In other words, the external resistance is 3.33 times the value of the normal resistance of the lamp when burning at normal voltage.

The values of the intermediate stages of resistance to cause the lamp to dim gradually from "full" to "out" can be similarly calculated, the results being plotted in the form of a curve from which deductions can be made, especially if the lumen output curve is also plotted on the same graph. In the example we reduced the voltage to 10 per cent of normal, which would be a practical "black-out," as, although the filament might be seen glowing, it would not be producing sufficient light to render objects visible by reflection, more especially if it was behind a blue or green medium that would absorb the red rays, these being almost the only visible rays produced by a

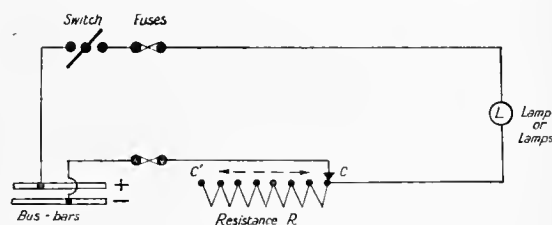


FIG. 33

lamp under such conditions. To reduce the voltage from 20 per cent to 10 per cent of normal requires about one-third of the total external resistance, from which it will be realized that it is uneconomical to reduce to lower than the 10 per cent figure as no useful purpose is served. There is a further disadvantage, for to limit the size and cost of dimmers the large amount of resistance wire required for the lowest stages can be included only at the expense of the grading at the upper stages. This would be undesirable, particularly for dimmers controlling cyclorama lighting apparatus, where it is imperative that the voltage drop should be small and gradual at the beginning, because (as the table shows) the lumen output falls rapidly for small variations in voltage at this stage. If the lumen output falls too rapidly there is the chance of flicker in the lamps, and it is impossible to obtain the subtle tones or range of colour effects when mixing primary coloured lights. The importance of this point is now beginning to be appreciated generally, and progressive manufacturers produce dimmers with specified gradings instead of the usual commercial pattern, which, as long as it dims the lights without flicker, takes little or no account of the early

dimming stages. This position was satisfactory when the work of a dimmer was confined to the production of the effect of a change from day to

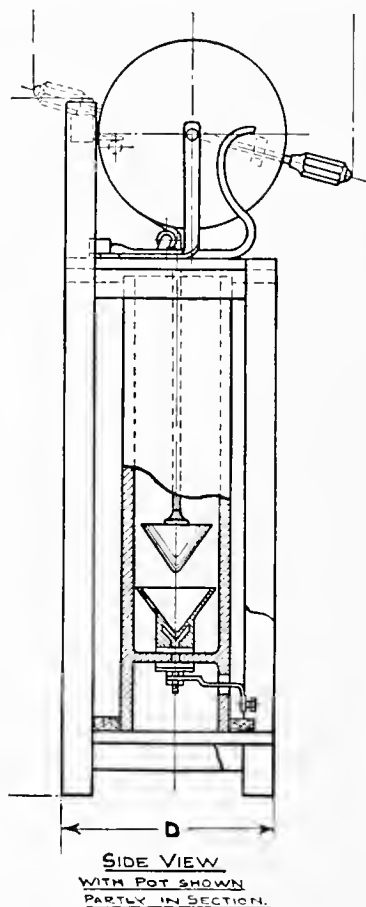


FIG. 34

night light or vice versa, but modern colour work demands fine, accurate dimming.

The movement of the contact over the dimmer is known as dimmer travel. In some dimmers, tested recently, it was found that a travel of less than 5 per cent of the total movement produced

a 50 per cent diminution of lumen output. However, there are now on the market at competitive prices dimmers which have 70 to 80 contact studs, and in which this point is reached after a 25 per cent travel. At a slightly increased cost, dimmers of 100 studs are obtainable. They give a 30 per cent travel for 50 per cent lumen output. The ideal arrangement is for the extent of the travel to coincide with the light output, but this can only be done by raising the number of resistance stages and contact studs, thereby increasing both the cost and size. Further research and experiment may produce the desired result without this increase.

Resistance dimmers are practically confined to the liquid, slider, and stud contact types. Of these, both the second and third are made of resistance wire, generally wound into coils, and are referred to as metallic dimmers. They are rapidly replacing liquid dimmers in the professional theatre and in new installations. With the possible exception of the smallest theatres, or where cost has to be kept at a minimum, the stud contact type is always used. It must be pointed out, however, that liquid dimmers possess great advantages for the amateur; they are relatively cheap and safe; they are able to deal with heavy currents, and by varying the strength of the liquid, or electrolyte, they will successfully control loads of different wattages within wide limits as compared with the metallic dimmer, which normally has a definite rating.

Fig. 34 shows a liquid resistance, complete with frame and winch. It will be seen that it consists of a vessel in which are two electrodes in the form of lead cones fitting one into the other in order to ensure good contact. Even so, there is likely to be a loss of a volt across the contact when normal current is flowing, and more if the apparatus is not kept in good condition. In practice it is important to see that the lower cone is drilled so that dirt cannot collect at the point and thus prevent this good contact.

## EXPLOSIONS

By A. E. PETERSON

*Founder, Sunday Night Adventurers ; Secretary, Kingston Marionette Players, etc.*

THERE have been many attempts to show on the stage the awful conditions that obtain during war-time in the trenches, in hospitals, and at sea.

In Velona Pilcher's play *The Searcher* the stage is set in such a manner that it suggests the steely interior of a gunbarrel, and throughout the play there is the "relentless rhythm" of the barrage that forms a tonal background to the action. What a contrast to the days when the thrill of the evening consisted of an execution, as in *The Deserter of Naples*, where one saw "A Solemn Procession of Soldiers—A Regimental Band playing the Dead March—and the awful Ceremony of SHOOTING A DESERTER." In place of the single volley of rifle fire, the present-day producer must be able to suggest, and suggest convincingly, every variation of explosion, from the subdued "pif" of a revolver fitted with a silencer to the stunning crash of a howitzer that is fired at close quarters. In some plays the "effects" are so complicated that a specially trained staff is retained and accompanies the play when it is on tour.

Realism in one play was supplied by a small brass cannon, loaded with gunpowder, and fired by means of a percussion cap and lanyard. The cannon was mounted on a carriage with wheels to overcome the recoil. It was twelve inches long, and in its firing position it faced a wall, which was protected from damage by a sheet of steel. Almost the same noise effect could have been obtained by firing a revolver loaded with a blank cartridge into an empty tank.

As an alternative to the use of the small brass cannon a maroon or a large single report cracker, fired in an iron drum or tank, will give a report that is equally satisfactory. The sound has a deep tone. There are two methods of firing these, one by what is called friction ignition and the other by electrical ignition. When the former is used a bead of composition is struck, just as a match is struck on a box, and the explosive is dropped

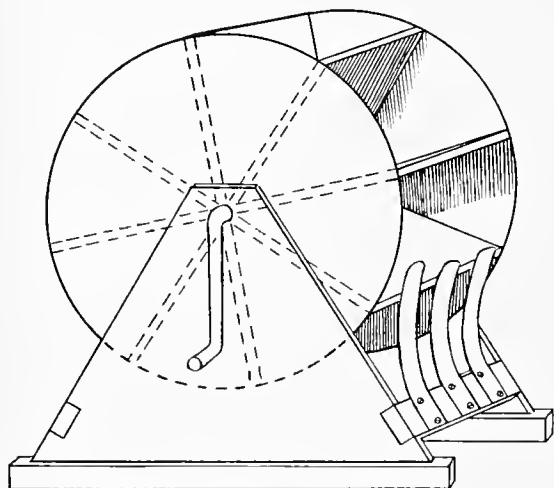
into the tank. In order to prevent any risk of accident and also to ensure the safety of the operator, a time fuse, generally about three seconds in duration, is interposed between the friction composition and the explosive. The more simple method is to use electrical ignition. In this case the explosive is provided with an electric fuse, which is connected up in circuit with a battery or with the lighting installation of the theatre or hall, and immediately contact is made, by pressing a switch or button, the explosion follows. This method of firing the explosive has a great advantage in that the explosion can be arranged exactly on the cue, without any guesswork on the part of the operator, who with the previous method has to allow for a time delay which, if miscalculated, would probably ruin the effect.

Should it be desired to accompany the discharge of heavy guns with a smoke effect, this may be arranged with the aid of a "smoke case." Smoke cases are usually burnt in an iron bucket or tank, care being taken to prevent any stray spark from the opening coming into contact with any inflammable material. Messrs. C. T. Brock, the firework specialists, supply equipment of this description.

If it is not desirable to use either firearms or fireworks the effect of a heavy gun being fired at a distance can be obtained by suspending a metal cask, with one end open, and striking it with a heavy wooden mallet. The reverberations are "rolled off" on a bass drum, which is struck a number of times, the sound being diminished at each blow until it fades away. If a metal cask cannot be procured it is possible to suggest gunfire by using the drum alone. In this case the drum is given a violent blow, which is followed by "rolling off." The faint rumble of guns in the distance can be conveyed by a slight vibration of the plywood thunder sheet if there is no other occasion during the play when the thunder apparatus is used.

If it is necessary to discharge one of the trench

guns known as a "whizz-bang," the noise may be made by blowing a suitable blast on a siren type of whistle, following this by firing a revolver loaded with a blank cartridge into an empty tin biscuit box. The shell should "whine" its way through the air, but should not be heard after the shot is fired.



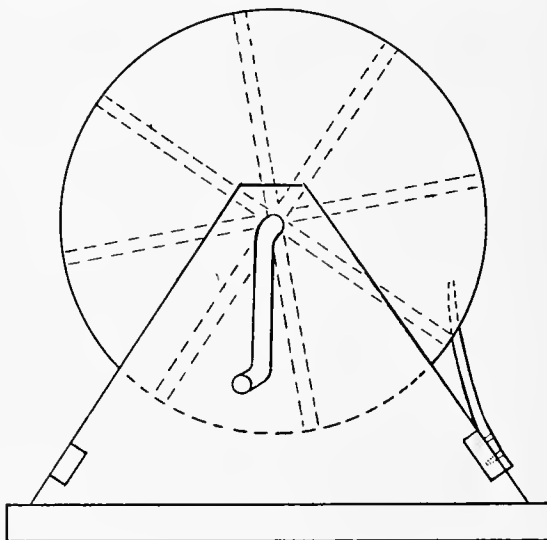
The visual effect of shells bursting is obtained by fitting a wooden box with a glass front on the inner side of which is painted the vivid representation of a bursting shell. An electric lamp connected to a switch is placed inside the box and the impression of the shell exploding is obtained by operating the switch at the instant the noise is made. A shell box and one of the electrically discharged fireworks already described may be operated together very effectively. In a bombardment by the enemy a number of these shell-boxes may be used. In each case the glass front should be hidden so that the bursting shell is not seen until the lamp is flickered.

A small "flash," similar to that used by illusionists, may be used to suggest hand grenades being thrown in the dark. The flash consists of a small wad of guncotton or flash paper which is lit by breaking a small tube of sulphuric acid on it. When this effect is used, the hands should be protected by rubber gloves. A drum supplies the noise of the explosion.

The glare of fire is made by laying a train of

ordinary red fire powder across a piece of tin or other metal and igniting it with a match, the amount of powder used being determined by the length of time the glare is required.

In all effects where a certain amount of smoke is produced it is wise to make certain that none escapes into the auditorium. The audience may



enjoy the spectacle of seeing dense volumes of smoke rolling upwards, but their pleasure is spoilt if they are inconvenienced by the acrid smell of gunpowder or any other explosive that may be used.

Machine gun fire may be supplied by a special cracker fired in a metal box or it may be suggested very simply. A couple of canes and some sharp sounding surface, such as a cushion with a leather cover or the canvas from the wind machine, stretched taut between the backs of two chairs are required. The seat of a bentwood chair when beaten properly produces a suitable noise. The person who is responsible for the effect holds a cane in each hand and strikes the cushion or canvas sharp blows that are repeated at regular intervals. The shots are timed to give a suggestion of mechanical accuracy, and a noise like  
pom pom pom pom pom . . . pom pom pom  
pom pom . . . pom pom pom pom pom . . .  
should be aimed at. The rapid continuous rattle of a Maxim gun may be produced by a machine that is similar to the wind machine, but with a



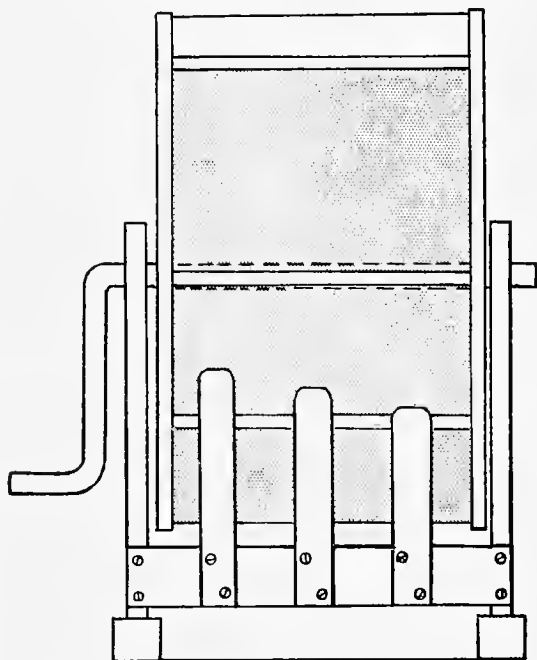
smaller drum or cylinder as shown in the illustrations. This produces a noise that sounds like 'taptaptaptaptaptaptaptap. Irregular bursts of rifle fire can be suggested by arming as many of the cast as possible with canes and by getting them to beat a sheet of plywood or a leather cushion. A wooden clapper, such as farmers use for scaring birds, provides an excellent noise for battle scenes, and is useful for other purposes.

Should it be necessary to stage a murder or a suicide, it is possible to obtain a revolver that is realistic in action. It carries twelve rounds .22 blank cartridge and can be loaded in view of the audience. When the revolver is fired the flash and wad are ejected upwards at right angles to the line of fire, and the barrel, being solid from end to end, may be brought close to the person who has to die. The noise of a rifle or a revolver shot can be produced by clapping together two pieces of wood, about three feet long, three inches wide, and an inch thick, joined at one end with a strong hinge, which is countersunk. The surface of the wood should be planed smooth and even.

The Great Lafayette used to stage an illusion in which after many confusing changes of character he eventually assumed the part of Napoleon and appeared on the stage mounted on his famous white charger. The spectacle was the grand finale and showed the debacle of the retreat from Moscow. Much use was made of "noise effects," smoke cases, and red fire, and to the accompaniment of the roar of heavy guns the orchestra thundered out the famous "1812" overture. Through the dense smoke the audience saw at the back of the stage the gleam of moving bayonets, drooping banners, an occasional cavalryman, and at odd intervals the grim muzzle of a cannon. These effects were made of cardboard and were mounted on endless bands of canvas that passed round rollers operated by hand. The invention of this device was welcome to the producer of old who, in order to present a spectacle of this description, usually had to engage a small army of supers. In order to maintain the illusion they marched round and round in a circle past some door, window, or archway. That famous old play *A Royal Divorce* owed much of its success to the fact that whenever possible the management used to engage the band of the local volunteer

regiment to play the necessary music, and the willing co-operation of officers and men in providing a "real" army, which fact was well advertised, usually ensured the use of the "house full" boards.

The modern producer attempts with ease feats that can hardly be believed. The spectacle of an



Atlantic liner sinking at sea after striking a floating mine will be described in detail later, but a description of the means to effect this will not be out of place here. The explosion was arranged by placing in the centre of the darkened stage a small circular iron tank and exploding in it one of the electrically operated bombs already described. The tank was of the size and shape of a domestic dust-bin, and the top was fitted with a fine wire gauze mesh which, whilst it effectively prevented the accidental escape of any of the exploded material, allowed the audience to be thrilled by the visual effect of the vivid flash that seemed to come from the actual contact of the ship's bows with the mine.

In staging a production in which firearms are discharged or explosives are used for stage effects it is necessary to prevent any inadvertent infringement of the Explosives Act or the Regulations that govern the carrying and use of weapons that

are described as "lethal." The Local Authority sometimes places the responsibility of administering the Explosives Act with the Weights and Measures Department, whilst the Administration of the Acts of Parliament dealing with firearms is vested in the police. Both these Departments are always willing to advise on any point, and readily place their experience and knowledge at one's service.

It is not necessary to have a licence to carry a gun when the gun or revolver has a solid barrel and cannot possibly fire a bullet, but as there are frequent alterations in the Regulations, and so many pitfalls in law, it is a wise precaution to

submit for approval whatever kind of weapon it is intended to use. The law does not accept ignorance as an excuse, and if it is proposed to use for stage effects grandfather's old-fashioned smooth-bore fowling piece that hangs on the wall as an ornament the experts should be consulted, as it is quite possible that even this type of gun may have been brought under control by an Order in Council or an addition to the Regulations. A Chief Constable may issue a certificate that entitles the holder to "hold and carry a gun for stage purposes only," and such a certificate is renewable every three years. The initial cost is five shillings; the renewal costs half a crown.

## MOUNTING THE PLAY

By DUMAYNE WARNE

*Author (with Phil Forsyth) of "The House," "The Ultimate Revue," "Second Thoughts," etc.*

BEFORE discussing the two different ways in which scenery may be provided for an operatic production, it is needful to decide, first of all, whether or not scenery should be used at all—in other words, whether or not the play can be effectively staged in curtains or in some other kind of formalized setting, such as screens.

Generally speaking, it is better to use ordinary painted scenery than any other kind for musical works. Perhaps this is because the situations that occur are so improbable. For example, in moments of physical danger or other emergency, the leading characters frequently burst into song instead of taking some quite obvious step to extricate themselves from the difficulty. This is so unlike real life that unless the settings look realistic the audience will not believe in the characters and will lose interest in them altogether.

In cases of grave difficulty curtains could probably be used by a skilful producer for some plays, but one cannot imagine many of the musical works with which one is acquainted being given in anything but the accepted scenery.

In referring to curtain settings, by the way, I mean the kind of curtains that are a make-shift for scenery, not the kind that are installed in theatres with stages of the most modern type, where the curtains are such as to make ordinary scenery completely unnecessary. On these stages settings can be devised that are far more elaborate than those possible with ordinary hired scenery. But even on these stages curtain settings would probably only be of use, to any great extent, in opera of the grander sort. This is probably because almost all other kinds of musical works include comedy, either light or low, and comedy requires certain external conditions, such as properties and environment, to help it to succeed. And honest-to-goodness comedy (with music) somehow does not seem to fit in with curtain settings, which are almost bound to be somewhat ethereal.

If a compromise is necessary, it should be remembered that the audience will accept, without demur, a convention, such as curtains, at the beginning of a play. If a change is made afterwards to ordinary scenery, they will probably not observe it, but will go home satisfied with the evening's entertainment. If the play begins in ordinary scenery and then changes to curtains, they are much more likely to notice the change, even if only subconsciously. They will have a vague feeling of incompleteness, which they will take home with them. What an audience feel about the end of a show is most likely what, in retrospect, they will remember of the performance.

It must not be imagined from the above that I have any prejudice against curtains or other formalized settings. On the contrary, for dramatic works, they are often definitely preferable to the usual scenery. In the production of revues, if these may be called musical works, curtains are invaluable, both for sketches and for other numbers. Unless the production is a particularly spectacular one, the audience see each scene for such a short time that they do not get tired of it, and making the necessary changes is greatly facilitated. For a short time, one strongly coloured property, such as a chair or a standard lamp, with suitable stage lighting, substituted for another equally strong property, will have the effect of making the stage look completely different.

Lest it should be imagined that curtain settings always mean plain black curtains set on the stage in the form of a box, it should be explained that doors, windows, staircases, and coloured backings are as much parts of curtain or screen settings as they are of canvas painted ones. The producer who has the misfortune to be faced with the necessity to stage, whether for a competition or not, any play, musical or otherwise, in plain curtains, is deserving of sympathy. The art of transforming a wall of a plain drab colour (one of the most useful for stage curtains) into a thing of

beauty is merely a matter of having an adequate, not necessarily an elaborate, lighting outfit, and of knowing how to use it.

Ordinarily, professional producers of musical works do not expect to have to invent curtain settings for their productions. In fact, the one who happened to be capable of doing so would probably require a fee compared with which the cost of hiring scenery would be comparatively unimportant. An amateur might be prepared to contemplate the task, but most likely only if he were keenly interested in the particular society.

#### PAINTED SCENERY

It seems, then, that for the purpose in mind ordinary painted scenery will be more suitable than curtains or anything of the kind. The next thing is, as in the case of the costumes, to decide whether to make it at home or whether to hire it from one of the usual scenery stores. This, again as in the case of the costumes, will probably depend on whether or not there is anybody available who is capable of doing the work. Building and painting scenery are much more difficult tasks than making costumes. Many ladies have some knowledge of how to use a needle, but few people have any acquaintance at all with what goes on in a scenic studio. It will not require to be stressed that the work is highly specialized and must not be lightly undertaken by anyone who has only a superficial knowledge of, say, landscape painting to recommend him.

The materials and the technique of the painting and of the carpentry are special, to say nothing of the difficulty of finding a place in which to work.

For the benefit of those who are interested, it may be mentioned that there are two methods of doing the actual painting. The carpentry is, roughly, the same in each case. In one the canvas is hung up in a frame and painted, and in the other it is spread out on the floor. The latter is called the continental method. In any case, the whole process is elaborate, and, while it should certainly be attacked, in due course, as should every other branch of stagecraft, by the established and experienced company, it is not advisable for a society to embark on scene-building until they have become well versed in the other aspects of their hobby.

But painted scenery is not the only kind that

can be made at home; in fact it is, perhaps, the one kind that is best not made there. There are certain other ways of building sets that are worthy of consideration by amateurs who have aspirations in this direction, although it is doubtful if either of these methods would secure the approval of the ordinary professional stage manager or scenic artist.

The first one is especially suitable for use in connexion with interior sets. It consists simply in pasting wall-paper on to canvas covered flats (the technical name for the big screens of which stage walls are built up) and back-cloths. This presupposes the possession of the necessary flats, etc. Since the walls of ordinary rooms are not covered with paper from floor to ceiling, it is necessary to paste other paper of suitable design into the appropriate places to suggest skirtings, dados, picture-rails, etc.

This kind of scenery looks surprisingly effective from the front, but it is useful in interiors only. Its most serious disadvantage is the difficulty of fire-proofing it properly. The laws with regard to fire-proofing scenery are most strict, and rightly so. The only variation that occurs is in the zeal with which it is insisted by local authorities that they should be carried out. In some theatres the weekly inspection of the scenery in use for the time being consists of actually exposing samples of the stock to a gas-flare or other highly inflammatory agent. The unpleasantness of a situation in which the whole of the scenery for a production has been condemned by the local fire authorities on the day of the dress rehearsal can easily be imagined. Yet it is quite within their powers to do this, and it is right that it should be so. For the cause of Art is no excuse for endangering the lives of the public; yet some amateurs seem to feel it unreasonable that they should not be allowed to jeopardize the existence of some hundreds of their fellow-beings in order to give a performance.

#### CANVAS SCENERY

Canvas scenery can easily be fire-proofed. There are certain complications with regard to the way in which the proofing matter affects the colour of the paint, but it is the scene builder's duty to be familiar with this and to do his work accordingly. Paper is quite another matter. I

believe a process has been invented by means of which it may be fire-proofed for a short time, but what effect the preparation has on the colouring of the paper I cannot say. This aspect must be most carefully examined before any arrangement to use paper-covered scenery is made. The conditions under which the audience are admitted to the theatre have a considerable bearing on the amount of interest that the authorities take in the condition of the scenery.

Another disadvantage of using paper scenery is the ease with which it becomes torn and otherwise damaged. On the other hand, provided the canvas is not affected, it is easy to repair, and the whole thing may be covered with a different paper for a subsequent production.

The other way of making scenery at home is to paste paper on to flats in the same way, but in this case the paper is supplied especially for the purpose by Messrs. Samuel French, Ltd., of London. This firm make sheets of paper, double crown in size, printed, so that by pasting them on ordinary flats in the manner indicated above almost any scene can be built up. There is a sufficiently wide range of designs to make it possible, with a little ingenuity, to construct almost any scene, either exterior or interior.

They also supply wood cut into suitable lengths and numbered so that flats can be made at home. These may be covered with a special linen, which is both cheaper and lighter than ordinary canvas, to which the paper sheets may readily be fastened with paste.

Doors and windows are also available in various different designs.

The society which decides that the possession of scenery is desirable would be well advised to consult this firm's catalogue.

Generally speaking, it is not much cheaper to make scenery by any method than to hire it. Pasting wall-paper on to flats is inexpensive, but the flats have to be procured and the necessary doors and windows fitted. The only advantage is that the society may be storing up for itself a stock that will much reduce the cost of future productions.

#### WALL-PAPERED SCENERY

It has been suggested that wall-papered scenery may be repapered from time to time; similarly,

the other kind of paper scenery may be recovered, and the positions of the doors and windows changed in each production. Different curtains, hangings, carpets, furniture, and flowers will all help to disguise a set from time to time. But ultimately a society's audience will get tired of seeing the company in front of the same coloured background, and fresh expense will be necessary to provide new scenery.

It will be for the committee of a new society to decide, when they embark on their first production, what course they are to adopt, assuming, that is, that they are not pinned down to one kind of scenery or another by some extraneous circumstance. The following points will have to be borne in mind.

#### BASIC POINTS

Firstly, that nothing is to be gained by amassing a stock of scenery by a society which can expect to exist for a short time only, so that it can never secure a proper return on its investment.

Secondly, that a place must be found in which the scenery may be stored and not be damaged by moth or damp. If such a place can only be rented and not secured without payment, the aggregate of these payments over a protracted period, together with the initial outlay, must be considered.

That a place must be found in which the work may be carried out goes without saying. But also there must be some means of transporting the scenery to the theatre or hall at a cost which is commensurate with the economy that, it is hoped, will be effected by building the settings at home.

Great care should be taken, when the production is to be given in a hall which is not a regular theatre, that there will be no difficulty in getting the flats into the building. Theatres are provided with doors specially for this purpose; ordinary halls often are not. If the doors are unreasonably small and the difficulty cannot be overcome, the only possible solution, having found out in time, is to examine the possibilities of building and painting the scenery inside the hall.

When the committee have considered all these things, they may decide that it is not worth the trouble, in the circumstances, to make scenery, but that it will be preferable to hire it. The proper procedure, then, is for the business

manager, or other official to whom the duty is allotted, to write to various scenery contractors stating the requirements and inviting estimates. The lowest will not necessarily be the most suitable. Sometimes it is necessary to send scene-plots (the technical name for plans of the stage and scenery) to the contractor before he can make an estimate. These are provided by the producer.

When the scenery is to be made at home, the scene-plots usually need not at first be as formal as when it is to be hired. When the producer can talk to the scenic artist and see the work as it is progressing, he can provide what is required from time to time. At first only dimensions and places of doors and windows are required. Later, further details become necessary. But when scenery has to be ordered by post from a distant town and sent by rail to the country, the plots must be most carefully drawn, or the building up of the scenery at the dress rehearsal (fitting up, as it is called) will be a long and wearying business—and in the end it may not be satisfactory.

It is most important that scene-plots sent to the contractor should include full dimensions. The depth of the stage and the width of the proscenium opening should be clearly shown, together with the distance that the backcloth is required to be from the footlights. All doors and windows must be accurately drawn, and if they are to open (the word "practical" written against them conveys the required meaning to the professional) it should be stated which way they must open, i.e. "off" or "on" the scene and "up" or "down" stage. Door-knobs, window catches, etc., must all be indicated or the contractors will be justified in leaving them out.

It is advisable for the producer, after he has sent the plots, to call at the store to examine the scenery that the contractors intend to send, with a view to checking the colours to ascertain if they will be suitable.

Some halls, other than regular theatres, have all sorts of curious regulations regarding stage scenery. Some will not allow stage-screws to be put into the floor or nails to be knocked into

anything. Others will not allow the permanent borders to be touched. Few halls can fly scenery (that is, suspend it by ropes above the stage so that it may be lowered into position when required).

It is essential that all such peculiarities should be discovered and communicated to the providers of scenery, or tremendous difficulties will have to be overcome at the dress rehearsal.

For a big production the contractors will usually send a carpenter who is familiar with the scenes to superintend the getting in and fitting up of scenery. This saves a good deal of time and trouble, but, of course, it adds to the cost.

With regard to changing the scenery, it must be ascertained first of all that it is possible to make changes efficiently, and a suitable staff must be engaged for the purpose. In a professional theatre there will usually be a permanent staff that is quite competent to carry on after the carpenter from the scenic stores has left. In halls where there is no regular stage-staff the manager can usually secure the services of suitable people, or the work may be undertaken by amateurs, perhaps members of the society that is giving the performance. Scene shifting is just as much a part of stagecraft as anything else, and should be studied in the same way.

But societies are warned against what seems, until it is examined more closely, to be a reasonable economy; this is, in a professional theatre, to employ an amateur for any work that entails an ordinary member of the staff losing his employment during the duration of the production. Stage hands are not highly paid, and it does not add to the prestige of a society to have a number of them waiting about the door of a theatre with no work to do because they have been dismissed for a time in favour of one who is doing the duties for amusement. The theatre is an absorbing and entertaining hobby, but to a great number of people it represents work and a means of livelihood, and amateurs have a great responsibility that they do not, in pursuit of their amusement, cause suffering and hardship to any of their fellows.

## THE HEAVY COMEDY PARTS

By D. GRAHAM DAVIS

Editor of "The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal"

THERE is a world of fun to be drawn from the stage figure of a large, stolid, man finding himself in situations of a humorous nature. How much funnier do these situations become (outside of farce) when the actor appears blissfully unconscious of the comicality of the part. That is the keynote for these Gilbertian roles. These heavy comedy parts, although cast on somewhat broader lines than the light comedy leads, call for a display of unconscious humour, requiring little, or no, emphasis from the actor to achieve the desired effects and laughs. Like the light comedy parts, no two members of this group are more than fundamentally similar. Each calls for a style which, while to some extent identical, has largely to be adapted to the part presented.

Enough will be stated in the following brief survey of these characters to make it plain that they cannot be regarded as comic parts. They are the creations of a humorous brain, which transferred to them a generous allowance of humour; but their creator never called upon his interpreters to add any extraneous comic aid. They represent, for the most part, that type of person met with in real life who is so intensely funny because he takes himself so seriously. One can point again and again to actions in which these characters indulge that would seem to give the lie to my statement. Yet, on reflection, it will be seen that it is the actions themselves that are funny, far more than the manner in which they are performed. Take, for example, Wilfred's lumbering attempts to dance during the "Cock and Bull" duet, the comic terror of the Sergeant of Police when the approach of the pirates is heard, and Poo-Bah's efforts to raise himself from a sitting to a standing position. Is there anything in any one of these, or similar, examples, which would be any the funnier in the hands of a comic musical comedy (or music hall) actor than in the more restrained hands of the true Gilbert and Sullivan comedy artist? Again the analogy of the pork pie applies.

THE LEARNED JUDGE (*Trial by Jury*) should be represented as a pompous, elderly man fully aware of the importance of his position, and, in his own mind, yielding to none in admiration of his capabilities. A certain dignity and judicial bearing are required as assets to the judge's status. There must be an inkling that, despite his honoured position, he is rather a rogue (albeit a most lovable one). The humour of the part should be aimed at in a quiet and unctuous manner, and, as in real life, the judge should tend to dominate the stage (or rather the court) to some degree. Beyond that, all that is called for in the acting is a good character sketch of the more human type of high court judge, who can be severe yet have a merry twinkle in his eye. Alternatively, the part may be played on the lines of the light comedy leads, as a rather snuffy little gentleman, but the characterization of the judge lends itself more to the accepted practice of including the part in the heavy comedy group.

THE USHER (*Trial by Jury*) also falls into this group, although not previously mentioned in this connexion. It is a part offering scope to the actor who can realize just where comedy ends and farce begins. But if it is likely to overstep this narrow barrier, it is best if the part be gently removed to the fifth group, and regarded as a "subsidiary, but very important, baritone part."

The usher should be represented as a fussy, shabby man, running here and there with curious, rheumatically steps. A study of the real-life usher will be rewarded. There is much that is humorous to the lay observer in the manner in which these functionaries go about their tasks. All this should be conveyed by the stage usher, with just that little touch of exaggeration that needs such careful handling.

DOCTOR DALY (*The Sorcerer*) is a part that is frequently misunderstood by amateurs. For this reason, the alternative of placing the part in the baritone category is one that can be commended. The part is really a straightforward, sympathetic,

study of a kindly, gentle, country clergyman, to whose even existence the startling events of this opera come as a disturbing and perplexing storm



Photo by J. W. Debenham

"I WAS BORN SNEERING"

Mr. Edward Robey (son of the famous comedian)  
as Pooh-Bah in an amateur production

to hitherto unruffled waters. His prototype can be found in many a parish. No conventional stage curate is wanted, and any attempt to introduce such a reading, with the "de-arly beloved" type of voice, is, to say the least, to be deplored. It is not without interest that two recent professional

Dr. Dalys had youthful experience in cathedral choirs, and both modelled their readings on clerics with whom they had come in contact in those days.

CAPTAIN CORCORAN (*H.M.S. Pinafore*) brings a return to the true heavy comedy part, although of a different style from, say, Pooh-Bah or Wilfred Shadbolt. Any conscious recognition of the absurdities of the part should be avoided, while the bearing and appearance of a bluff naval officer must be realized. But the rendering must not be too straight, and a comedy touch is decidedly necessary. This touch is needed to help the ending. Otherwise the comedy acting required to carry off the change of uniform and condition might appear to indicate a change of personality. Whether Captain or A.B., Corcoran remains the same person.

Slightly different treatment is required in the scene with Josephine in the first act. Here the captain has to show himself as a kind and fond parent, and treated with just the right touch of seriousness the scene can become most effective. Then, in the scene with Little Buttercup, at the beginning of the second act, the captain should play up to the air of mystery created by Buttercup and the semi-dark stage. This not only helps the scene, but gives it the requisite air of mystery, which will make the revelation of Buttercup's secret all the more convincing later in the opera. It is one of those incidents that leave a sub-conscious impression in the minds of the audience, so that when the surprise comes, it is sudden and startling without being so unexpected as to detract from the following of the story on the stage.

THE SERGEANT OF POLICE (*The Pirates of Penzance*). Candidly, this richly humorous part is funniest when played by an actor who does not realize how funny he is going to be! It is far better to be too stolid in this part than too humorous. The character itself is too exaggerated in the writing to need this fact to be pointed by the player, and the absence of any conscious drollery from the acting is all to the good. I once persuaded a committee to cast as the sergeant a droll fellow who was sublimely ignorant of the fact. He was, in private life, such a one as the policeman, and played the part as himself. He was an enormous success, but it would not have done if the opera had run for more than three



nights, for, at the end, he was beginning to see how funny he was, and started to play up to this discovery, with the result that he lost a lot of his effect on the last night. The part should be played as our old friend and protector, the London "bobby" of the old school. An expressive face is a great asset to the part, as a restrained use of facial by-play helps to set off the stolidity of the man's bearing.

PRIVATE WILLIS (*Iolanthe*) is placed in this group largely on account of traditional usage. It neither started therein nor is it to be found at the present time, professionally, in the group. The part can be taken by any good baritone who can sing and look the character. It can easily be marred, and put out of focus, by too much by-play and fooling at the wrong moment. Certainly the part is rich in humour, but humour of the inward kind. The song at the beginning of the second act should be given, as befits a soliloquizing philosopher, in a half-ruminating manner—neither as a straight concert item nor as a comic ditty. His part in the quartet, "In Friendship's Name," gets its humour from the musical setting, with its *roulade* in the sentry's solo line. A certain amount of restrained comedy business should be introduced by the exchange of glances with the Queen between the verses of her song "O, Foolish Fay," but as a foil, and not a lead, to her. For the long period during which the sentry is on the stage, but not concerned with the action, an attitude of mild interest should be assumed. It is neither desirable nor necessary for the sentry to draw, on the one hand, any attention to himself or, on the other, to appear to be taking no interest at all in the proceedings.

KING HILDEBRAND (*Princess Ida*) should be represented as an imposing, rather choleric, potentate. Hildebrand is not a typical heavy comedy part, and he is not the most important character in the opera. But as a king should dominate his court, so does Hildebrand call for an actor with a strong personality so that the part may stand out in such a fashion. This is another part that can easily be transferred to the baritone group without loss of effect.

POOH-BAH (*The Mikado*) is the heavy comedy part *par excellence*, yet it is often spoiled by mere buffoonery. A heavy, unyielding mountain of a man is called for. He must not be so grossly fat

as to be repulsive, and the padding must be done with discretion, for no amount of it will make a thin-faced man appear genuinely rotund. It is the pompous, oily, dignity of the man, coupled with his deliberate and heavy movements and (frequently) outraged sense of fitness, which bring most of the fun to the part. These attributes, and



Photo by J. W. Debenham

#### THE GRAND INQUISITOR

Although a more elderly make-up would have been an improvement, this photograph shows that the Don need not rely on bulk for his impressiveness

these alone, call for emphasis. In all other respects the acting must consciously convey nothing but the man's puffed up self-importance. Speech, movement, and gesture must be slow and unctuous, as befits one of such lengthy pedigree. Experience has shown how necessary it is to insist that Pooh-Bah himself is not funny. It is the *part* that is, perhaps, the most richly humorous ever seen in comic opera. The actor, to all outward appearances, should be truculently serious from beginning to end.

SIR DESPARD MURGATROYD (*Ruddigore*) is a

complex character; really two personalities in the same part. In the first act he is the traditional wicked squire of melodrama, in the second, an unctuous church worker and schoolmaster. Cadaverous of visage, he makes his first entrance with melodramatic gait, but he sings in a more plaintive strain than his appearance would suggest. In his succeeding soliloquy, although still with the tones of his kind (lengthening "child" into "chee-ild," etc.) the manner must be that of the villain despite himself. Then comes Dick Dauntless. At once the sinister manner returns, but when he learns that Ruthven is alive, a change gradually appears. As the narration proceeds, so Despard's face clears, and when he finds himself free to disclose the truth, and exclaims, "Free at last; free to live a blameless life, and to die beloved and regretted by all who knew me," there is a note of genuine relief in his voice.

In the second act Despard appears in black clothes of sober cut. His whole manner and appearance have changed. Gone is the sallow face with its scowl. In its place is an expression of almost cherubic innocence. From every pore is exuded platitudinous unction. This character, being burlesque of two extreme stage types, calls for a little conscious exaggeration in both its aspects.

WILFRED SHADBOLT (*The Yeomen of the Guard*), like Pooh-Bah, is not too well understood by many amateurs, both actors and producers, who will either try to be funny or encourage clowning in the part. That elusive, "unconscious humour" is here needed to the full. Wilfred is a clumsy, miserable-looking individual more uncouth than repulsive. For all the mirth-provoking lines there is nothing in the part to suggest that the man possesses the slightest grain of humour or sense of the ludicrous. It is the serious way in which he growls out the absurd remarks (which are far from absurd to him) that makes the part so richly humorous. There must be no conscious striving after comic effects. It is, in fact, a part that a skilled actor, unused to broad comedy, would make far more convincing than the most accomplished comedian (playing the part in his accepted manner) could possibly do.

And, again, the opera itself is more serious than the others in the series, and calls for acting still more related to real life.

DON ALHAMBRA DEL BOLERO (*The Gondoliers*) is a personage of great importance. He is not, as frequently represented, akin to that rascal Pooh-Bah, and, unlike that character, must show that his dignity sits him like a well-tailored coat. He can unbend to a slight extent without losing his dignity, but he can never permit a liberty to be taken with his exalted person. In manner and speech, there should be a certain oily smoothness, and although condescending, his condescension is never of the patronizing kind. One thing, in this connexion, which should not be overlooked by the actor, is that the Don, in every sense of that much misused word, was a gentleman (even the prisoners awaiting torture were provided with "all the illustrated papers"), and this, with that calm dignity of his, make the often seen mouthing, strutting figure, with over-drawn beetling (or worse, "George Robey") eyebrows quite out of keeping with the drawing and conception of the character.

This telling role is somewhat lacking in the inner humour of the other parts. It cannot be played on straight lines so easily as can Wilfred, or even Pooh-Bah. He would become a dull dog (I almost wrote "don") if so presented. But a dry, rather sardonic, humour is better than broad effects, with ever so slight an emphasis on the pompous and ponderous side of the man. Until the opera was re-dressed by the late Charles Ricketts, R.A., in 1930, the don was not dressed as a grand inquisitor should be, that is, as an ecclesiastic. For the part there is wanted a man of striking appearance, not necessarily fat, but of an imposing figure—a well-preserved man, and a good liver. The fact that this group of parts, with the exception of Pooh-Bah, is usually presented by men who are, let us say, well covered, is more fortuitous than intentional. But the larger the light comedy lead may be, the more important it is to have a bulky, heavy comedy player, for much depends on the contrast between these two men.

## BALLET: SOME PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

By ARNOLD L. HASKELL

*Joint-Founder of the Carmargo Society, Director of the Ballet Club*

HAVING given an historical survey of modern ballet, I will conclude the subject with some practical considerations that will be of use to those who intend to give dance recitals or to fit solo dances and small unambitious numbers into a production, and also with some advice to those who think of taking up ballet dancing as a career. There is ample need for such advice, I am convinced, judging from the many letters I receive weekly, and the shows, by pupils, I have witnessed.

There are various obvious points that I will not dwell upon. It is certain that anyone who intends to arrange dances, or to perform them, will have to have some few years' experience of dancing, and will, therefore, have realized the type of stage that is needed, the condition of its surface, and such eminently practical details; but my first point they may well not realize (many professionals do not): it is that it takes a genius to keep an audience interested in a solo for more than *one minute* or so. Too many untrained people give dance recitals in which they "express themselves." Let them realize that Anna Pavlova, great genius as she was, whose every movement was interesting, did not rely upon herself entirely unaided for an evening's performance and that her famous solos, including *The Swan*, *The Californian Poppy*, and *The Dragonfly*, lasted for only two minutes. Realization of that fact should have a chastening effect on those who expect the public to look at them dancing their own creations to their own costumes for anything up to two hours. Few dancers are ever justified in giving recitals at all, and then *not* because they have insufficient technique to fit into a ballet company, which is the underlying reason in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred.

We have seen that in the whole history of modern choreography, there are not half a dozen outstanding names. Therefore, it is evident that

the beginner should play for safety, and not for originality. This is not a defeatist counsel. If the real creative mind be there, it will develop all the better for a cautious beginning. Your true choreographer is usually a dancer of parts, for creation comes to the brain through the body, and cannot originate purely in the brain. My practical points are—

1. Do not attempt to create, to arrange, or to produce a dance, much less a ballet, unless you yourself are a dancer of some experience. Ideas for ballets from non-dancers are nearly always so much waste paper.

2. Think in the terms of the material you have to handle. Even the biggest choreographer must do this. With mediocre material you will present a mediocre work, but you may bluff to a certain extent by limiting the range of movement. Nevertheless, remember that it takes a great artist to stand still or to walk across the stage with meaning, so that a comparatively easy technical exercise that savours of the class-room is more effective than extreme simplicity, and for some unknown reason it always impresses an audience when a dancer gets up, however laboriously, on her points.

3. Avoid symbolism or satire. It takes a great choreographer and a great dancer to succeed with either. The nearer your humour is to the broad lines of clowning, the more obvious it is the more successful you will be. Ballet can be extremely subtle, but all through its history there are notable clown and character parts, from *La Fille mal Gardée* and *The Sleeping Princess* to *Scuola di Ballo* and *Beau Danube*.

4. Avoid at all costs, and I say so with feeling as I have suffered from it more than most, frenzied rushing to and fro on bare feet, cymbal-banging, pipe-holding, waving cheap coloured scarves in the air. Barefoot dancing requires all the discipline that many years of experience can

give. I can remember few barefoot dances that were not utterly ridiculous and only one that was truly great, Pavlova's *Bacchanal*.

5. Choose music that is not vague and indefinite, something that is melodious, and that falls into the class of good ballet music: Delibes,



PRUDENCE HYMAN AND WALTER GORE IN  
"CARNAVAL" (FOKINE)

Tchaikovsky, Drigo, Strauss. Such music will help both audience and dancers.

6. With non-expert dancers, the question of costume is of first importance, for costume not only helps the dancer, but diverts the attention of the audience. For this reason, ballet practice dress is a traditional black tunic, which shows up in merciless fashion every fault. The choreographer of a small production should aim at a pleasing stage picture, and use curtains rather than a set.

7. Finally, from three to four minutes is ample time for any little ballet, just as one minute is long enough for any solo. This somewhat negative advice is all that can conscientiously be given. Were it followed, many a school performance would be less of an ordeal.

Earlier I dealt with the economics of dancing. This will have allowed the intending dancer to see, that from that point of view at any rate, the rewards are few and the way is hard. The first essential for the young dancer is a good school. While the exceptional dancer, that rarity, the dancer of genius, will flourish in almost any circumstances, the average dancer may easily be ruined by faulty training, both physical and psychological. The girls' school atmosphere, that spirit of fair play that says: "X has been here longest, so that she must have the best role in the school performance" is inappropriate in a dancing class. The class must not try to turn out a competent machine, but a dancer of personality who is different from her fellow pupils. All too often the exceedingly promising child is retarded from shining at the expense of her elders. That is the great fault of our English dancing. A certain



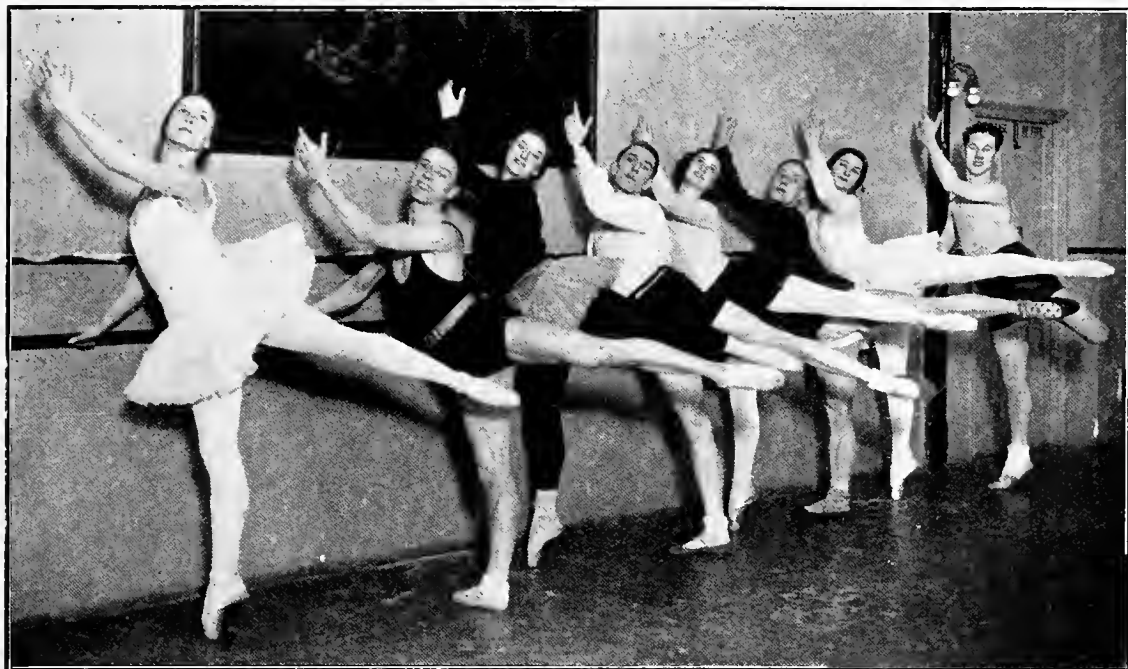
PRUDENCE HYMAN AND WALTER GORE IN  
"THE BLUE BIRD" (PETIPA)

amount of jealousy, while it may be bad in school, is necessary in the development of an artist. We must not confuse character training with the making of artists, but if the character is in question, then ultimately it will surely benefit from the hard work and the sacrifices that are involved.

The team spirit must give way to individualism if we are ever to produce more than useful members of a *corps de ballet*. After all, children are individuals, and although they must be disciplined, their individuality must not be destroyed. There are a hundred different subtle shades in the making of a movement, and it is the manner in

ality that can dominate a large company and hold an audience for a considerable time. The true classical dancer can, as far as actual dancing is concerned, perform absolutely anything, so that a classical training is the background for all work.

*Demi-Character.* The difference between this and the preceding division lies in the spirit and the



A CLASS: 1929

which that movement is made that gives personality, so that even in the technical training respect must be shown for personal rhythm. It may not be generally realized that, just as with singing, there are in dancing certain well defined divisions parallel to soprano, contralto, bass, tenor, though these divisions are on the whole dictated by temperament rather than physique. To force a dancer into the wrong division is to ruin her. These divisions are—

*Classical.* This is the ballerina, *première danseuse* division. At its extreme it means brilliant, sparkling, technical dancing in the works of such a choreographer as Petipa, though it is used a little loosely to include the romanticism of Fokine in *Sylphides*. Classicism calls for a conventionalized mime, and for a powerful person-

acting rather than in the dancing, which may well be fully as technical. *Demi-caractère* is more naturalistic in the sense that the dancer portrays a role, and interprets it closely; she is not just the eternal ballerina in whatever circumstances, with a series of set dances and an *adagio* as a climax. An admirable example of *demi-caractère* is Columbine in Fokine's *Carnaval*, the very spirit of mischief and flirtation, or the young girl in *Le Spectre de la Rose*, dreaming of her first dance. It is the *demi-caractère* dance that is the most usual in concerts and school recitals, and it is perhaps more suitable to the English temperament than pure classicism.

*Character.* This denotes National dancing that has been "balletized" for the stage, and all the various buffoon roles that are a tradition in *ballet*.

Before I conclude, I must mention certain semi-official bodies that are playing an immense role in the development of dancing and that are taking the place of the State. These bodies have raised the whole standard of dancing teaching. I do not for a moment claim that examinations play any part in the making of *artists*, but they may well do so in the making of *dancers*, and discipline is an essential of ballet. The standard of examinations set by the leading bodies is high, so that teachers who have received their certificate, even if they are not naturally gifted pedagogically, at any rate, know what the best work should be, and the public is safeguarded to that extent.

There is the Operatic Association of which my fellow adventurer in the formation of the Camargo Society, The Editor of *The Dancing Times*, Mr. P. J. S. Richardson, is Secretary.

I must refer to the immense influence of the great *maestro*, Enrico Cecchetti, on the whole of dancing in this country; an influence that has grown ever stronger in the years since he died through the fact that so many of his pupils and holders of his certificate are amongst the most influential teachers in this country. His method has seemed especially suited to the English temperament.

With the death of the *maestro* this knowledge might easily have been lost. It was vast, exact, and concrete, but never actually codified in a scientific manner until his friend, Mr. Cyril Beaumont, came to the rescue, and the resultant manual of dancing is a classic. The type of mind that delights in reading a musical score could not do better than to study this before a ballet season. I have never found that the *cuisine* of an art spoils the pleasure. Mr. Beaumont, together with various pupils of Cecchetti's also formed a body, the Cecchetti Branch of the Imperial Society, for the practical use of this immense knowledge, and many of our finest dancers have passed the examinations.

It will be seen, then, that private enterprise has taken the place of the State controlled ballet schools. The next step is to add to the technical curriculum a sound and artistic education.

The examinations set by these societies do

emphatically ensure a certain standard of efficiency in teaching.

There is an important warning that the young ballet dancer should heed. It is, alas, a counsel of perfection that few are able to follow. Music hall engagements, where the same dance is performed nightly, or any casual engagements under different managers, and, perhaps more than anything, the cinema, ruin the young dancer who has serious ballet ambitions. To my mind it took such a front rank artist as Alexandra Danilova some considerable time to recover her finest form after dancing for a year in *Waltzes from Vienna*, at two performances daily. Only the very formed can afford to do such work. Dancing is a vocation for which everything must be sacrificed. In that sense the dancer is near to the instrumentalist in attitude. This ideal of sacrifice, which may seem strange to the layman, is one of those things that are taken for granted by the dancer. It will not be discussed; it is a part of life.

I will put this more simply in terms of a typical time table of a girl who is fortunate enough to be working in a first-class ballet company, her pay amounting to a little under £20 a month. Any pity would be wasted, for she considers herself extremely lucky to have such an opportunity, and her wants are few.

9-10.30. Class.

11-1. Rehearsals (finish at 12 if there is a matinee).

2.30-5. Rehearsal (or a matinee).

7.30-11. Performance. (Early arrival at the theatre to warm up as well as to make-up.)

This is not the exception, but the rule. In the Russian ballet in the great days of Fokine it was even harder. On occasions he might call a rehearsal at midnight after a performance that had fallen short of the high standard required.

I have depicted a grim picture, yet to many people a place in the *corps de ballet* of a big company is paradise. I can feel with them. Some day a strong, true ballet tradition may be planted in this country. We may yet talk of an *English school*, perhaps people will look up to us and foreign dancers may assume English names. There are signs of such a possibility. Ballet is no more the exotic thing it was in the past.

# HOW TO TRAIN YOUR ACTORS

By CONSUELO M. DE REYES

*Producer, Little Theatre, Citizen House, Bath, and Everyman Theatre, Hampstead; Lecturer in Drama, University College, Exeter*

IT is essential that every actor should write down a movement that applies to himself, directly it is worked out, and should learn his part with this movement directly in view. Nothing is more trying to the patience of a producer than to have repeatedly to remind an actor of the same position. The memorization of the play should be carried out early, as there can be no freedom of gesture, no attempt at real characterization, until books are discarded. At, say, the sixth rehearsal books should disappear, however many promptings may be required.

Strength and purity of voice must also be worked for at this point. Whatever sort of voice the character has to assume, it must be a carrying voice that can be heard throughout the theatre. We have frequently had difficulty with players when we have allowed them to "take it easy" with the voice at first rehearsals, as although it may seem a rigorous training that demands that they should put as much effort into the preliminary rehearsals as into the ultimate performances, unless this is done they will invariably form the habit of under-estimating the vocal power required, and consequently be inaudible. Correct breathing, fully controlled, is the essential feature of a good voice. Firm breath control alone can give the sharp and clear-cut enunciation that is required. Emotion affects the breathing, and, likewise, there is an appropriate method of breathing for every emotion, such as laughter, gasping, weeping, etc. All vowels must be sustained and final consonants must be pronounced. The most common fault of all amateurs is that of dropping the last few words of a sentence so that they are lost to the audience, whereas the level of the voice should be maintained throughout.

Phrasing, or the opening out of the lines by use of the pause, meaning, expression, and emphasis, are all points that must be considered. Certain words are important and must be brought out into high relief, while others may be passed over as

less essential; an even, monotonous delivery must be avoided, and the whole mental picture that the play is intended to convey must be given through the colour of the words.

The body must remain as fluid as possible, and should be used in a manner that suggests the part. Thus the very act of drawing the body up to its full height, of moving slowly and with dignity, bring a sense of nobility. A lightness of body suggests youth and health; heaviness suggests illness and age.

Certain traditional rules of acting, founded for the most part on sensible observations, will be of considerable help in the training of players. Among the most useful are—

All turns should be made towards the audience. The face is more expressive than the back, the turn is less clumsy, and it avoids throwing the voice behind one.

When two or more actors enter together, the speaker enters last. This allows the speaker to throw his voice forward towards the audience, not back, and the action to come forward.

The business, or gestures, which are required for the characterization should always precede the actual words a little, since the visual image is frequently more quickly grasped than the actual words.

Unless his part demands movement or business, the non-speaking actor should stand still. The longer an actor retains one poise, the stronger is his position in the stage picture. One of the most noticeable features of Miss Sybil Thorndike's great portrayal of St. Joan was her ability to stand still for long periods at a time. This does not mean that an uninterested, dull expression is to be adopted, but that the centre of magnetism must be in the poise of the body and the light of the eyes, which should be centred on the main action. Every action employed by any character on the stage must be full and complete. There is always a tendency with amateurs when they start to act to employ a half-finished gesture, with the result



that it merely appears futile and incompetent. Everything that is done should be done firmly and for a purpose. Throughout the play actors must keep up the characters and not stop acting just because the speech is finished. Difficult scenes, such as love scenes and tragic scenes, should not be carried too far in general rehearsals. A few

even *tempo*. Some passages must be given more slowly, especially if their motive is tragedy; others more quickly, especially if their motive is comedy. Every play will have certain outstandingly important parts; others will be relatively unimportant, and emphasis and a definite climax will be necessary to outline these.



"MIRACLE OF VERDUN"

Photo by J. W. Debenham

Showing method of employing skeleton screens and doorways on the stage set at the Embassy Theatre

private rehearsals of the principal actors will advance the work much further, and the fact that the other players will see the work for the first time in a much more advanced stage will add to the interest and act as a spur to the players themselves. After the individual actors have been taught their work there comes the problem of the ensemble playing. Up to this point, the actors have been in the position of single players learning their instruments, but now they must be played together. The director must concentrate on team work. It is impossible to teach a single player at this stage of the work. Individual faults must be overlooked or covered up in a good production.

During the last three or four rehearsals, the actors and director will specially consider the emotional effect that they desire to impress on the audience and they will work to secure it. Again, the play must not be presented at the same

Above all, the actors must learn to work with one another and to help to produce the desired effects. Those with less prominent parts must play them well for the sake of the play. The hall-mark of a good production is always the inter-play, and all actors are extremely conscious of the psychological help that is thus afforded by members of their own company.

During final rehearsals, it is best for the director to let the acts run straight through without interruption, and merely to make notes of any required changes, leaving corrections until the end; when only faulty parts need be repeated.

The purpose of final rehearsals is to give the actors complete confidence in themselves, and this cannot be done if the producer himself is constantly altering details. The time for details is past, and it is probable that what has not been accomplished in previous rehearsals cannot be



done at the last minute, while it must be remembered that the effect of a play on an audience is largely the effect of the whole.

If there are lines in the play that are likely to attract laughter or applause, the actors should be specially trained to hold the scene until such interruptions are over. Nervous and inexperienced

provide inexpensive soft shoes for all scene-removers; otherwise noise made during the intervals between the scenes may break the whole atmosphere of the play.

The last two rehearsals should be dress rehearsals. In our own companies we always try to hold a dress rehearsal during early stages as well, so



A GROUP OF CITIZEN HOUSE PLAYERS ON THE GRAND STAIRWAY OF CITIZEN HOUSE, BATH, DEPICTING THE HISTORY OF THE MANSION, AS WRITTEN IN DIAMOND LEGEND ON THE WINDOWS

Method of acting without a stage

actors are likely to continue their lines. Continuation spoils the enjoyment of the audience and successive lines are lost. All curtain calls should be rehearsed, and as far as possible positions that are typical or symbolical of the play as a whole should be adopted.

Soft shoes should be worn to eliminate the sound of footsteps. It is an excellent practice to

that each player may know exactly what he has to wear, solve any problems of dealing with unaccustomed costumes, and visualize his own part as vividly as possible from the start. These final rehearsals must also include scene-shifters, electricians, and all other members of the producing force, whose work must absolutely synchronize with that of the main production if the

resulting effect is to be a unity. Every effort must be made to get a full measure of life and of vitality into the production: hence the fact that it is always better to over-play than to under-play at early rehearsals. If at first there is a tendency to over-act, this will probably weaken, but if nervous actors are allowed to give tame and tentative performances, the final result will be uninspiring and flat. Whenever a scene drags, quicker cue-taking will probably revitalize it. This does not mean, as players so often think, that words should be spoken quickly (with resultant gabble) but that the whole sentence should be speeded. The consequent result brightens up the whole play.

Throughout the final rehearsals a definite theory of design must permeate the whole work. This must be kept in view by every member of the cast. The basic principle of stage design, which is also the idea of the play, must be grasped and interpreted. Sometimes a play has an idea that may be expressed in a theme. A theme of a play is the fundamental observation on which the play is based. Shakespeare observes that a noble, impulsive nature of great beauty may have a single flaw that becomes the cause of ruin to itself and to all around it, and he may express this conception in *Othello*. Goethe, seeing and understanding the tragedy of old age and the fact that the body wears out while understanding and longing for life increases, writes *Faust*. As Gordon Craig, the great leader of the new movement in the theatre, points out, every play suggests a mood. Thus Gordon Craig sums up the mood of *Macbeth*—

"I see two things. I see a lofty and steep rock and I see a moist cloud which envelops the head of this rock. That is to say, a place for fierce and warlike men to inhabit, a place for phantoms to nest in. Ultimately this moisture will destroy the rock; ultimately these spirits will destroy the men."

Certain colours and certain lines will begin to associate themselves with these ideas. Colour and line are most important factors in play production. A costume may be made of the richest material or of the cheapest cotton, but its effect will depend on colour and line. A set of scenery will not depend on the detail of its workmanship, which

may be completely lost; the two factors that mark it as good or bad will be its colour and its line.

The entire matter of colours is subjective, and psychological and objective values can be determined no more than they are in music. Musical sounds produce a certain feeling of cheerfulness or depression, and the same is true of colours. The only ultimate guide will be the producer's own reaction to the situation, and as he learns to react more truly, so will he become more of an artist.

In exactly the same way, it is impossible to lay down rules concerning line. In general, however, it can be stated that long lines give a sense of dignity and seriousness suitable for tragedy; sharp curves and circles suggest lightness and comedy; and jagged lines and angles produce a feeling of excitement. Throughout the play the setting must help the actors and not distract from the acting. If any setting calls attention to itself, however artistic and interesting it may be from the viewpoint of pure design, it will be in conflict with the play. On the other hand, it is difficult to give the effect of a good production if the setting is poor. The method of supplying adequate staging is, however, simple if the sound rules are observed.

The theme or central idea of the play should be found, and two or three colours to suggest the key colours of the play should be noted, together with the sort of lines that are judged most appropriate—either the long sweeping tragic lines or the short jolly ones.

A set of drawings for the stage costumes, and a model if possible for the set, should then be executed. Advanced producers and actors may desire to effect stylization, which is an effort to catch the spirit of the play and to express it in the setting. A stylized play is one in which the director has attempted to bring out a central idea by unifying his designs. Thus in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle* the artist will realize that the authors have written a burlesque and he should emphasize and be guided by this spirit to make all the elements in his design slightly grotesque. He will exaggerate costumes, making the ruffs of the Elizabethan dresses unusually large. The colours of the costumes should be brighter and gayer; the hats and shoes of unusual shape, so that everything partakes of this method of joyous exaggeration.

# ADVERTISING AND PUBLICITY

By REGINALD A. RAWLINGS

A USEFUL record which may be compiled, either by the treasurer or by the acting manager, is an analysis of the sales of differently priced seats for each production shown as a percentage of the seats available. Different kinds of production may attract different types of audience, and it may be found that it is easier to fill the more expensive seats at an operatic production than at a straight play, or vice versa, or that comedy attracts a better paying audience than heavier types of play. If an analysis similar to

charity, but with the confident expectation that they will be getting value for money, the success of the society is practically assured. However, some form of advertising is essential for every production. This matter may be left to the secretary, or a special publicity secretary may be appointed. Advertising is expensive. A careful eye must be kept on the expenditure, and a definite plan of campaign drawn up before any steps are taken, otherwise the society's limit of expenditure may easily be exceeded. A definite

## — AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY

### ANALYSIS OF SALES OF SEATS, 1932-33

PRICE	SPRING, 1933			AUTUMN, 1933			SPRING, 1932			AUTUMN, 1932		
	Available	Sold	%	Available	Sold	%	Available	Sold	%	Available	Sold	%
1s. 3d.	1,000	950	95	1,000	850	85	600	580	97	800	760	95
2s. 4d.	1,200	950	79	1,200	1,100	92	1,400	1,100	79	1,250	1,000	80
3s. 6d.	600	500	83	600	550	92	800	540	68	750	500	67

that shown is compiled for a series of productions the committee will have valuable information to guide them in deciding the prices they can fix for the seats, and the most advantageous number of seats to be provided at each price. Experience alone can guide with certainty a committee in fixing the maximum and minimum prices to be charged. Nothing is more depressing than having to play to half empty houses, as will happen if the prices are too high; but, on the other hand, since many amateur societies give their profits to charity, there is a depressing sense of partial failure if a reasonably large sum is not handed over to charity at the end of the run; and, in any case, if the society exists solely for the sake of art, the prices of seats must be fixed at such a level as will enable the society to pay its way.

The question of financial success or failure leads to a consideration of advertising. The best advertisement a society can have is a good reputation. If the public have learned to recognize that they can buy tickets for a society's productions, not with the feeling that they are supporting a

sum of money to cover all advertising expenses should be voted by the committee; and it is the publicity secretary's job to draw up a plan of action, allocating his expenditure to the best advantage among the various methods of advertising.

Publicity should begin as soon as the play has been definitely settled. Local newspapers are usually willing to insert a paragraph in their news columns provided it is attractively written and concise. A brief announcement of the name and nature of the play will be sufficient to arouse an initial interest, which can be gradually built up by further news paragraphs as the date of the production approaches. The members of the society themselves can do a great deal of useful work by talking about the forthcoming production, but they should be chary at this early stage of trying to press for promises to take tickets.

As the date of the production draws near the actual direct advertising must be considered. The newspaper advertisements should be as large and as bold as possible. The essential parts of the

advertisement are the title of the play, which should appear in the boldest type; the name of the society; the date, time, and place of the production; the prices of the seats, and where they may be booked. Overcrowding must be avoided, and a study of professional advertisements of a similar nature will show the amateur publicity secretary how best to set out his "copy." Do not forget to send complimentary tickets to, and to reserve seats on the opening night for, the Press. The publicity secretary should make a point of getting into touch with the Press representatives in order that he may give any information that may be required for the "write-up."

Posters should be printed on paper of a striking colour, or printed in two colours, and again it should be remembered that an overcrowded poster has much less "pull" than one which contains little more than the essentials displayed in bold type. Before the posters are printed the publicity secretary should interview the local firm of billposters to ensure that the posters can be exhibited in prominent positions at reasonable rates.

Smaller bills to be displayed in show windows are another valuable and comparatively inexpensive form of publicity. They should be printed in neat type in quiet, attractive colours. Tradesmen cannot be expected to give valuable window or shop space to large, crudely printed posters. Shopkeepers who display window-bills are generally willing to have on their counters a supply of handbills. These should not be distributed with too lavish a hand. Probably no form of publicity is more wastefully employed than handbills, and an extensive house to house distribution is rarely worth while.

Beware of starting the final intensive advertising too early. News paragraphs and members' conversation will have prepared the public for the society's announcements, but little ticket selling will take place earlier than a week before the opening date of the production. Public memory is short, and ten days or a fortnight before the first performance is quite early enough for the posters and bills to appear.

Special novelty advertising is often useful, particularly if the bookings are slow, or if performances have actually started and are not well supported. One or two men or women in costume distributing handbills in a busy thoroughfare are certain to attract a good deal of attention, and it may be possible to enlist the voluntary aid of members of the society for this form of publicity. The publicity secretary who has the slightest grounds for suspecting that some special effort may be necessary would be wise to think out and keep in reserve some such idea to stimulate a flagging public interest.

Amateur dramatic societies vary from small groups of village players to ambitious societies that number their members by the hundred. Some societies are run by an enthusiastic secretary-treasurer who does practically everything; others require a host of business officials. But since one of the chief traits of the good business man is adaptability, the suggestions that have been given on Business Organization and Management can be usefully adapted by all secretaries and other officials to the requirements of their particular societies.

The ultimate responsibility for the running of every properly organized society rests upon its committee. The secretary, the treasurer, and all the other officials derive their authority from, and act on behalf of, the society's committee. The only autocrat in the society should be the producer, and even he cannot be allowed unlimited power. The well-organized society should never be too dependent upon any one official: accidents will happen, and the society may be deprived of the services of its most useful official just at the most awkward time; but if the committee have been really alive to their responsibilities and have taken their proper place and interest in all phases of the society's activities, there will be no crisis if an official suddenly fails them. The feeling of confidence that knowledge of the ability to cope with such an emergency engenders is the best possible indication that the business organization of a society rests upon a sure foundation.





*Photo by Claude Harris*

MR. RALPH RICHARDSON

(2477)

# ACTING IN ROMANTIC DRAMA

By RALPH RICHARDSON

IT is necessary, first of all, to decide what we mean by Romantic Drama. The word "romantic" is defined as meaning "remote from experience; imaginative; preferring grandeur or picturesqueness or passion; fictional." Most drama would come under the heading "fictional" or "imaginative," and "grandeur" and "picturesqueness" would apply to the biographical play. When speaking of Romantic Drama we mean a special kind of work, and it is the label "remote from experience" that really fits it best, for to think of it in this way enables us to separate it from the "photographic drama," which, though it may contain fiction and passion and picturesqueness, seeks to be as near to experience as, say, the passing of cigarettes and whisks and sodas can make it. The late Mr. A. B. Walkley, when he was the dramatic critic of *The Times*, wrote interestingly on the romantic and the anti-romantic. "What do we mean by romantic?" he asked. He answered: "We all know the romantic . . . when we see it. But like so many other things that we all know, it is not very easy to define. Perhaps Pater's familiar definition of romance as strangeness with beauty is as good as any; nevertheless, it is rather summary and abstract, a clue rather than a map. Strange in what way? The morbid may be strange and yet realistic, the reverse of romantic. What could be more strange than the novels of Dostoevski? Or than the plays of Tchekov? Yet no one could call their works romantic. Many people could find the quality of strangeness in Mr. Shaw's plays, but assuredly not the quality of romance . . . romantic drama has a psychology of its own. The strangeness, to use Pater's word, of its people's minds lies in their being directed not to natural actions but to striking actions. . . . Realistic art may, or rather must, present you with the mixed characters of actual life; but romantic art, never. 'Sir,' said Dr. Johnson, 'do not accustom your mind to confound virtue and vice,' and that precept is religiously followed in romantic drama."

Shakespeare is the most important romantic dramatist; so important that he, with the dramatists of the Elizabethan Age, needs separate treatment.

The actor to-day is not called upon to undertake as much romantic acting as was the actor of a generation ago. This is the age of photographic art in the theatre, and it is the actor's business to suggest in the theatre life as we know it outside. He must represent Mr. Smith, the banker, and Mr. Jones, the baker, who must on no account appear to be "remote from experience." But though writers of naturalistic plays are more numerous to-day than the writers of romantic plays, romantic plays are written or revived, and in the production of these plays the present-day actor is set the problem of appearing as a romantic figure: think of *Monsieur Beaucaire* or *Richard of Bordeaux*. The characters in romantic plays are "remote from experience," and the method of handling them must be entirely different from the methods that are successful in the presentation of naturalistic plays.

How did the great romantic actors of the past set about their work? Think of an example. They had to present a prince of noble blood whose life was rich in wonderful adventure. To begin with, the actors concentrated on style. They wore their clothes with magnificence; they walked with elegance; and they spoke with more precision and care than mere audibility demanded. They had beautiful voices and exquisite manners. They were handsome in appearance. They dazzled their audiences and filled them with admiration for the superhuman creatures that were portrayed.

In the modern photographic drama the actor has to work in a different way. He seeks to interest his audience by creating the impression that on the stage he is what people are in the world outside the theatre. His aim is to appear to be natural. He carefully studies the carelessness and ease of life as they are known by experience by the audience. His art is not to dazzle by his

magnificence, but to arouse interest and to hold attention by the closeness of his sympathetic and photographic presentation, so that the audience may feel that what is happening on the stage could happen, if it has not already happened, to them.

Young actors and actresses at the beginning of their career sometimes have opportunities of appearing in romantic plays. To seize these opportunities is to work through most useful lessons because they teach and emphasize a sense of style that must be a characteristic of the most casual work of the modernist when he is engaged in plays of an entirely different type. An art student learns to draw from life and from the antique so that he may know the muscles and sinews of his models. Similarly, a young actor who takes advantage of the opportunities that are provided by acting in romantic drama to walk and to speak well will develop his art.

Some romantic actors who are cleverly convincing in creating and reflecting the spirit of romance in their portrayals experience difficulty in adapting themselves to the photographic drama, and much that is adversely critical has been written about them. The difficulties of photographic actors who attempt romantic work are seldom the subjects of stern criticism.

The recipe for playing the king of a tribe of

Israel, immediately after an engagement as a peer in a cast of a modern play has been fulfilled, is not just to "act more." The "style" may be emphasized, but emphasis alone will not suffice. The author's conception of the play and of each character in the play must be understood. The significance of the part that is portrayed must be firmly grasped, built up, and maintained. The character, illustratively, may have magic powers to cause water to gush from a stone or he may have killed a lion or other wild beast in single combat: there are few, if any, models for this work to be observed in the streets. Therefore, the romantic actor must be inventive. It is useless for the romantic actor of our times meticulously to imitate his fathers, though there is no doubt that their technique reached a high standard.

Something more than the mastery of the technique of walking and speaking well is required. A highly imaginative character requires for its presentation highly imaginative effort from the actor. A most important point is that the romantic actor must have romantic imagination. The expression of it has changed, and may change again. Nevertheless, to-day there is spontaneous appreciation of work that calls for the artistic use of this imagination.

Ralph Richardson



# PRODUCING ROMANTIC DRAMA

By C. B. PURDOM

*Author of "Producing Plays," etc.; Dramatic Critic, Founder of Letchworth Players and Welwyn Garden City Theatre; Hon. Treasurer, National Festival of Community Drama; Editor of "New Britain"*

ROMANCE is a form of comedy, which is not tragi-comedy, but has some relation to tragedy. Romance is not ordinary life, but life as we should like it to be. It ends happily, but it is serious in its progress, and touches heights and depths of feeling. Not much romance is written nowadays, because our realistic and cynical attitude does not favour it. For us, love is matter of fact and our poetry is satirical. Our characteristic form of play is comedy, in which life is analysed, commented upon, and treated as a comic affair. We cannot bear to be serious.

The romantic play is, next to tragedy, the most solid kind of play. It demands force in its playing, for romance, like tragedy, has depth. Its theme always is love: love which suffers, dares everything, and is victorious. In it love is elevated, dwelt upon, exhibited in all its richness and fullness. There is no comment, nor self-consciousness, but utter surrender to love's illusion and full acceptance of the values of love.

One of the most perfect examples of a romantic play is *As You Like It*. It is poetry, which romance must always be. It has youth, which love requires: age is set in it only in contrast to youth. It has gaiety, for in romance the heart is lifted up. It has a serious element, for the path of true love never runs smooth. It has a pastoral element, for love must have the spring and woodlands. And it shows poverty overcome and wrong put right, which is always part of the romantic dream—for lovers put the world to rights.

Compare *As You Like It* with *Much Ado About Nothing*, and you will see the difference between romance and comedy. There is romance in the latter play, the love between Claudio and Hero, but it is not perfect romance, nor are we invited to pay much attention to it. The theme of *Much Ado About Nothing* is the comedy of Benedick and Beatrice, which keeps always on the plane of manners: a play of the intellect rather than of the heart.

Examples of modern romances are Edmond

Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* and Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man*. Neither is pure romance. The first is tragi-comedy treated in a romantic manner. In its presentation it requires romantic



*Photo by J. W. Devenham*

LYDIA LOPKOVA (OLIVIA) AND URSULA JEANS  
(VIOLA) IN "TWELFTH NIGHT" AT THE  
OLD VIC., SEPTEMBER, 1933

playing or it fails, and the part of Bergerac demands more power than any but a very few present-day actors possess. *Arms and the Man* is actually called an "Anti-Romantic Comedy," but it has to be treated as romance. It is romance turned topsy-turvy, which is as near as we can get to it in this age. The play must not, however, be handled as comedy, or its value will certainly be lost: unfortunately, it is usually played in that manner. Raina and Sergius are

full-blooded romantic parts, and the rest of the characters must be given romantic treatment to support them.

Romance shares with tragedy the necessity for a hero. In tragedy the hero is in conflict with fate; in romance he is under the dominion of love. But he is hero in the one instance as much

In romance, too, the characters are personalities, not mere types. We must be interested in the particular hero. The lyrical element may soften the outlines of personality as it does in Orlando, in *As You Like It*, but that is largely because Shakespeare's interest was in his heroine—to be played by a boy, let us remember. We



Photo by J. W. Debenham

RICHARD GOOLDEN (SIR ANDREW AGUECHECK), ATHENE SEYLER (MARIA), AND ROGER LIVESEY (SIR TOBY BELCH) IN "TWELFTH NIGHT" AT THE OLD VIC., SEPTEMBER, 1933

as in the other. The romantic hero is one who gives up all for love and is justified. Note that it is love that makes the hero. In tragedy the hero is the prince; in romance the hero may be the nobody who surrenders himself to love. In tragedy there is a fall—the king who loses his throne; in romance there is a rising up—the humble man lifted on to the seat of love. Love makes every lover a prince.

are not asked to concern ourselves in romance with what the hero says, as in comedy, but with what he is and does, as in tragedy. Action is the essence of romance; and it is action in one direction—upwards, to the overcoming of all obstacles to the consummation of love.

We are ready, in my opinion, for a revival of romance. When that revival starts we shall know that national depression has reached its end. For

romance is symbolical of a period of accomplishment. Romance is idealism in action. The hero succeeding in love is mankind realizing its desires. When we get confident that we shall master the future, then romance will come back, and the hero will flourish on our stage.

So you see, I place tragedy and romance near

The playing of romantic parts calls for great intensity from the actors. It needs as much technique as comedy, and the lack of it cannot be so easily disguised as in many comedies. Fullness and power are its signs. The actor must get right into his part, for romance calls for depth of emotion.



Photo by J. W. Devenham

ONE OF THE FINAL SCENES IN "TWELFTH NIGHT" AT THE OLD VIC.

Lydia Lopokova as Olivia and Ursula Jeans as Viola (the two central figures), and Basil Gill as the Duke (second from the right)

together. Both depend upon faith, upon confidence in the destiny of man, upon the conviction that man can save himself. I do not say that romance is in conflict with comedy; for I think that comedy will continue to flourish beside romance. Indeed, comedy will gain when romance returns, for it will get more substance.

The producer must go for depth too. He must get deliberate yet spirited playing, a sense of exuberance and overflowing of energy. There must be nothing skimmed or held back, no meanness of any sort, but generosity of the most complete description. This must be pronounced in the acting and reflected in costumes and

setting. The spirit of romance is happiness. Therefore let costumes, setting, and lighting emphasize the idea of joy. Romance is victory, so let joy be the note.

In concluding these notes on the production of different types of plays, let me point out what my aim has been. I have endeavoured to suggest to the producer, and to the actor as well, the attitude he should adopt in setting to work upon any particular play. He should treat the play according to its character: that means to start right. He should recognize its character and thus know what is demanded of him. I do not mean, of course, that less trouble should be taken with farce than with tragedy, for example; with every play the producer (and the actor) must do his utmost. But the attitude to farce is entirely different from the attitude to tragedy; and unless farce is handled as farce and tragedy as tragedy, the result is bound to go wrong.

There is no danger of farce and tragedy being confused with each other; but there is danger of farce and comedy being treated alike, and the same with comedy and romance. We see examples of such mistakes on the stage every day. First recognize the play for what it is, and then it becomes possible to produce and act it rightly.

I call the difference a difference of attitude. It is really a difference of method. But I use the word "attitude" because I want to suggest a state of man. It is what the producer thinks about the play he is to do that matters, for it determines everything he does. And before the producer gets to work he has to think hard about the play, and

do more than think—let the play take possession of his consciousness. That is why his mental attitude is so important.

What I am actually pleading for is style. I do not care to use the word because it is usually misunderstood. Style is not a personal idiosyncrasy, nor is it an affection. It is that which belongs to the nature of the work done. If a producer's work is to have style (and an actor's too) it must arise out of the complete understanding and imaginative perception by the producer (or the actor) of the play upon which he is engaged. It is not the cultivation of mannerisms or fads—there are producers who go in for tricks of grouping or lighting or scene construction to create something personal and to make their work different from that of others. These things are of no importance, and when a producer follows them closely he admits his deficiencies. There are actors who cultivate tricks of speech, gestures, or movement in the vain hope of making themselves great artists, and their efforts are equally futile.

Be faithful to the play is the rule, which must not be departed from: style comes from that; it is honesty.

I have said nothing on the subject of melodrama or burlesque or phantasy or other hybrid plays. There is in fact no need to do so. Melodrama is false tragedy, burlesque is a form of farce, phantasy is the shadow of romance. The producer will know how to treat them when he recalls the main stem of drama from which they have sprung and how far they are from it.

## MAKING MODELS

By HAL D. STEWART

*Author of "Rizzio's Boots," "The Blind Eye," etc.*

SOME sheets of cardboard, drawing materials, a sharp knife, a box of water colours, and a roll of adhesive tape, are all the materials you require to make a model set. It is as well,

By having the model stage correctly to scale, or by having a stage on which the size of the stage for which the set is being designed is clearly marked, it will be seen at a glance whether the set will come within the required compass.

Next sketch in roughly on the paper the position of your doors, windows, and fireplace. Then mark off the set into the flats of which it will ultimately be comprised, taking care, wherever possible, to keep the width of the flats in even feet.

It is an advantage to have as

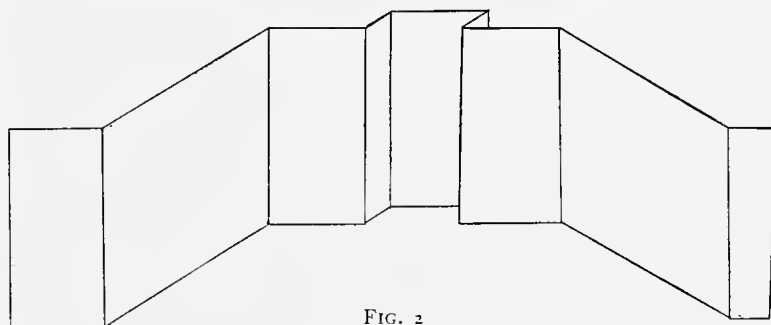
however, to experiment with paper before making your cardboard model.

First, fix your scale. Then cut a long strip of stiff paper, the width of the strip being the height of the set to scale. Measure the maximum width of the set at the back, and the length of each side wall. Add these measurements together, and then cut the strip of paper in order to leave it rather longer than the total measurements. Then place the strip in the model box or theatre, and fold it to the shape required. Fig. 1 shows the strip folded for a conventional three-sided box set. Notice that the return pieces are much wider than is necessary. This is accounted for by the extra length allowed for when the strip was cut. It may be required if you decide, as you well may, that this shape is too severe and unattractive. You may then decide to break the wall at various points. Fig. 2 shows such a break in the back wall, which, it is seen, uses some of this surplus paper.

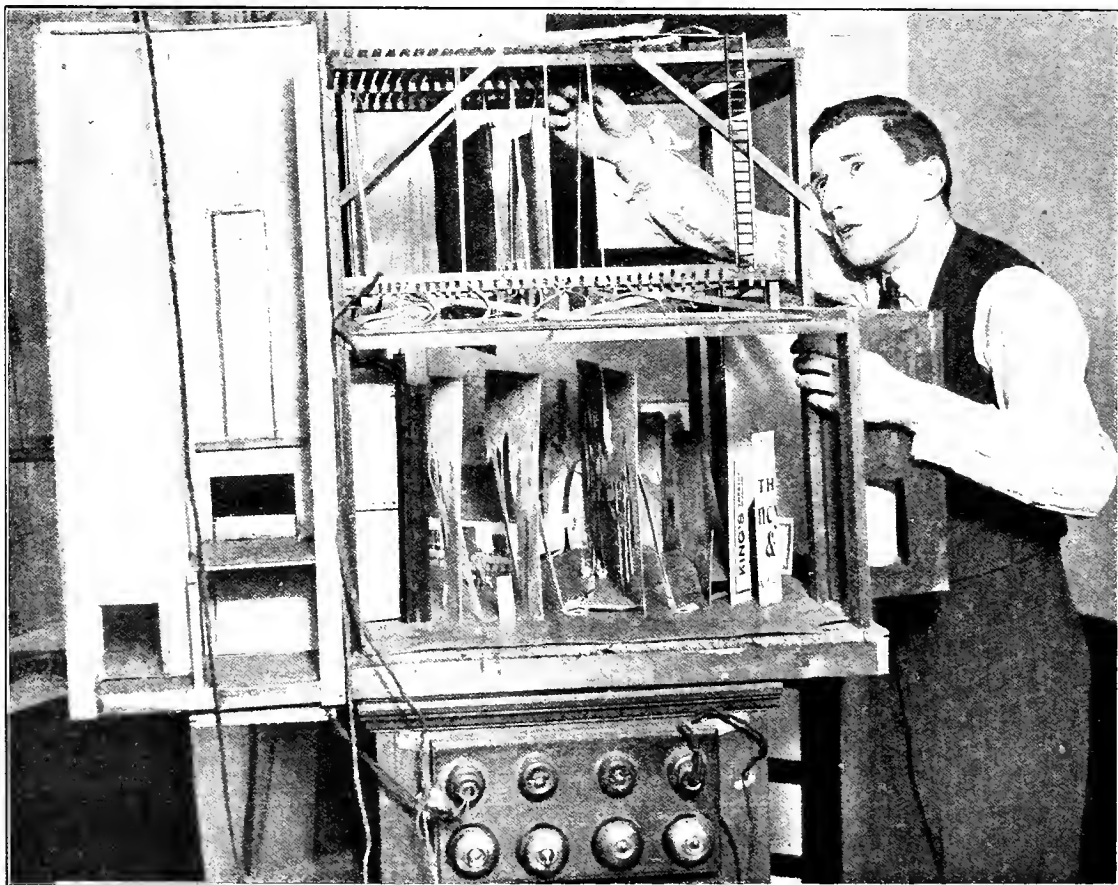
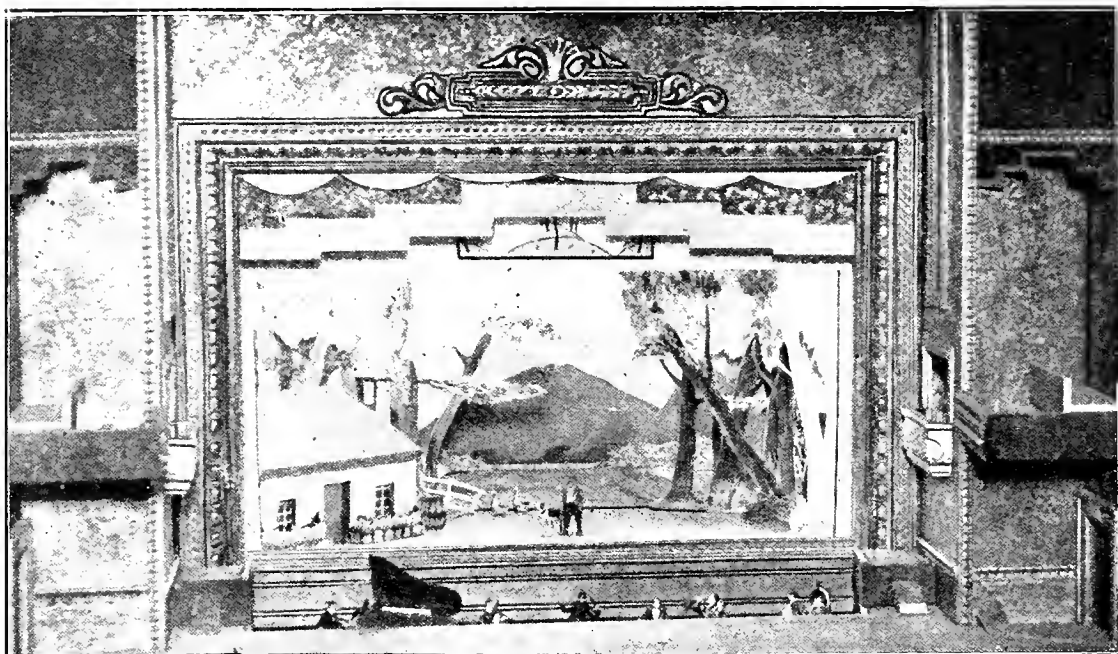
The paper can be folded easily, and various shapes tried out. Several paper models may be made quite quickly, and their shapes compared.

few joins showing as possible, but; on the other hand, wide flats are awkward to handle. Six feet is a good width, but 5 ft., 4 ft., or 3 ft. may be required. Flats narrower than 3 ft. are not generally used, except for return pieces. Always avoid odd inches.

Fig. 3 shows the completion of the first stage of your model—in this case a simple set. The paper model is complete with doors, window, etc., roughly indicated, and the flats are marked off.



All that remains to be done so far as this experimental model is concerned is to cut out the doors and fold them back so that they are fully open. If you are satisfied that this can be done without fouling the wall or a piece of scenery, and if you are satisfied with the shape and general design of



*Photos by Gibson, Glasgow*



your set, you can now proceed to make the model itself in cardboard.

Use cardboard of a medium weight, and, again, cut a strip equal in width to the scale height of the set, and in length to the sum of the back and side walls, being careful to include any return pieces used. This time, however, the length can

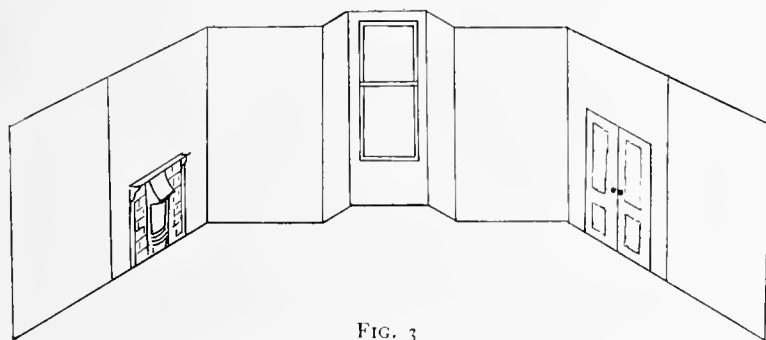


FIG. 3

be determined exactly, because the shape has been decided.

A *sharp* knife should be used for cutting the cardboard, and a sheet of glass forms a useful and an inexpensive cutting surface.

Draw in the doors, windows, and fireplaces. The position of these has been determined on the paper model, and they can be quickly transferred by means of a pair of dividers. The paper model and the finished cardboard model must be to the same scale.

The doors, windows, and fireplace must be drawn, not roughly, but accurately. Mouldings, panels, etc., must be shown.

Do not, however, draw anything in perspective. Where any feature projects from the wall, as, for example, a mantelshef, draw a line to indicate where the shelf will come, cut out the shelf to scale from another piece of cardboard, and fix it in position with adhesive tape. Draw in the picture moulding, and skirting, or dado, if there is one, and then colour the model with water-colour paint.

When using water colours, first mix the colours you require with plenty of water, in a dish, and then, with a sable or camel-hair brush, float the colour on, and allow it to dry. Never

dip your brush in the colour and apply it to the paper or cardboard. This method shows brush marks, and makes it impossible to get an even wash of colour. Wait until the colour dries, and if you require a darker shade, add another coat, but never add a second coat until the first is dry. Similarly, if your doors, for instance, are a different

colour from your walls, do not attempt to paint them until the colour on the walls is dry, or the one will run into the other.

It is advisable to decide the colour in the first instance by experiment on a spare piece of cardboard. By painting a sample and allowing it to dry you can mix the colour to the required depth, and obviate the necessity of having to apply a second coat to the model itself.

All the foregoing work should be done before the model is cut or bent in any way. Fig. 4 shows the appearance at this stage of a finished model for a set of which Fig. 3 is the preliminary paper pattern.

When all your colour is dry, rule faint pencil lines to show where the flats join. This is necessary for the carpenters who are to make the set. Then turn the cardboard face down, and, on the back, rule a line at every corner of the set. (It will be noticed that the set in the illustrations has six corners.) Draw a sharp knife lightly along each of these lines. This ensures bending the

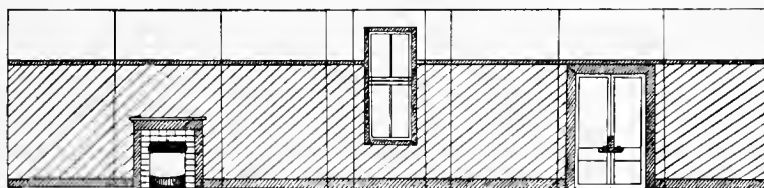


FIG. 4

cardboard at the proper place and prevents a ragged corner when the model is bent into the required position. Treat the hinge side of your doors in the same manner, and cut round the rest of the doors, so that they may be opened. Cut out the glass portion of your windows, leaving the frames and astragals.

All that remains to be done, now, is to bend

the model into position and to place it in the model theatre, fixing it to the stage by means of adhesive tape. Adhesive tape should also be used on the back of the model to strengthen the corners, as in Fig. 5.

Fig. 6 shows the model complete, as far as the walls are concerned, and bent into position.

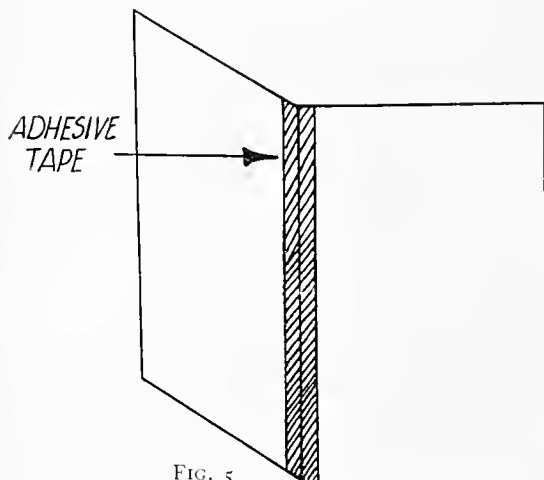


FIG. 5

A ceiling can be added simply by cutting a piece of cardboard the same shape as, and rather larger than, the floor of the model, and laying it on the top. Finally, add the necessary backing—in this case for the window and door. If the door backing is of the folding type (Fig. 5) it will stand by itself. The window backing will require a strut, which, again, is fixed by means of adhesive tape (Fig. 7).

This simple interior model is now complete, but it has still to be furnished. The work involved gives considerable rein to the ingenuity of the designer. Cardboard, stout paper, and matches are invaluable for making model furni-

ture. As the furniture will probably not be made, but will be hired or borrowed, the same necessity for accuracy does not apply as in the case of scenery. Avoid, however, making model furniture that will give a false impression.

The first plate on page 448 shows a particularly complete model theatre. The photograph

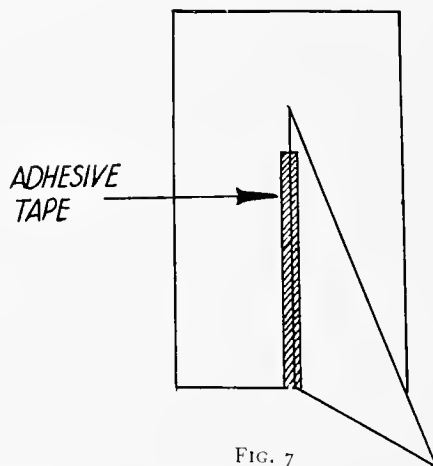


FIG. 7

might well have been taken from the front of the circle of a theatre. By looking at the second plate you will see the size of the model in comparison with Mr. Lawrence Anderson, a Glasgow designer, who made it in his spare time. This photograph also shows how complete the theatre is in every detail, and how well it is equipped for displaying model sets. Notice the grid, with twelve sets of lines, and the switchboard, by means of which each circuit is separately controlled. The circuits can be dimmed, and the current for the lighting is taken from the mains. I hope that this photograph may prove an incentive to amateurs to devote attention to this branch of stagecraft.

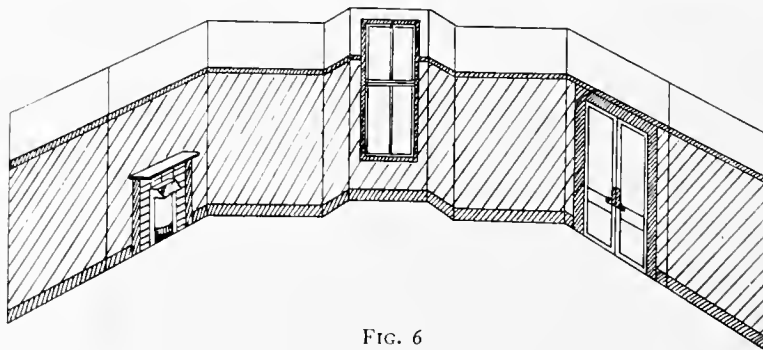


FIG. 6



## PLAY SELECTION AND THE PRODUCER

By F. E. DORAN

*Secretary, Manchester Playgoers' Club*

THE selection of plays is one of the major aspects of production, and I doubt if a producer can do really good work if he is out of sympathy with his job. Producers tend to become specialists, and it would obviously be a risky matter, though its result might be interesting, if a musical comedy producer were put in charge of an Ibsen play. In theory, and within certain wide limits, a good producer can tackle any sort of play, but with experience, certain sympathies develop, and it is well that a producer should have his heart and soul, as well as his head, at work on the job in hand. The producer should have a word in the selection of a play, or if an outside producer is brought in he should be someone who is sympathetic towards the aims of the society in general, and the play in particular.

The heaven of dramatic endeavour has many mansions, and while one with wide experience of production should have the key to most of the doors, actual practice shows that the same words do not always carry the same meaning. What is "art" to one is highbrow nonsense to another. "Art" to the latter is something that the highbrow would dismiss with a shrugged shoulder. "What the public wants" is a catch-phrase that has wrecked many a selection committee. The public do not know what they want. There is no such thing as THE public. There are *audiences*. There is an audience for musical comedy, another for heavy drama, another for comedy, and another for serious work. Some like to see plays they are familiar with, either by hearsay or experience. There is a small but secure audience for the adventurous new production: "first time on any stage" (and sometimes the last). These audiences overlap, of course, but I think it may safely be stated that the big audience for musical comedy is very little interested in the venturesome soloflight.

Selection committees and producers should, therefore, be quite clear to which type of

audience they intend to appeal. When the course to be run has been decided upon, it should be run boldly and decisively, it being remembered that the public has to pay the piper. Therefore the selection committee should see that the tune is the best it can produce.

This question of policy is all-important and fundamental, and is really the work of the society concerned. A clear cut policy of production will gain supporters; an indeterminate zigzag policy means indecision and loss.

When once policy is decided, the appointment of the producer is the foundation of success or failure. The producer is the absolute centre and focus. Sometimes the problem does not arise because it is the producer who has taken the initiative and gathered round himself a band of followers to perform certain types or qualities of play. This sort of society does well if the producer is trusted and farms out the business aspects to a good committee, the members of which see that he does not spend more than his hall capacity will produce. Usually, however, it is the society that comes first, and then the producer is attacked. If the committee is clear headed, it will take the producer into its confidence, state the society's objects, and be guided by what the producer says. If the producer is clear minded he will be quite definite as to what he *wants* to do, and if his sort of play does not conform to the tastes of the committee, he should not attempt something that is unsympathetic to his own ideas.

Sometimes the committee already has the play title in mind. Similar remarks apply. The producer should be one in accord with the play. If his tastes lie towards creative work, with original scenery, costumes, and lighting, he will be impatient at putting on a commonplace, oft performed farce, with stock scenery and hackneyed situations. On the other hand, the producer of the commonplace (and there are many excellent

producers in this category) would be at a loss when handed a script with which he was unfamiliar.

In selecting a play, assuming the producer problem to be adequately settled, many things should be considered; not least the acting capacity of the group concerned. It is not fair to a producer to hand him a cast the members of which have not the elements of acting in them, and expect him to produce even a tolerable show with the crudest elements of production materials, or employ all the resources technical science provides. Yet this wonderland is only the background against which the acting will appear, and if the cast is inexperienced or incapable the truth will out. It is an extraordinary thing, but confirmed by many years' intensive observation of the amateur stage, that those groups with the highest ideals usually have the least efficient casts, while the skilled actors are to be seen in solid sorts of play that are certain successes. The intellectuals rely too much on the author, whereas the other sort rely on themselves. Nevertheless, the selection of a play should primarily be governed by the ability to play it. It might be argued that in those circumstances no man can ever begin, as at some period in time he is inexperienced. Quite right; but experience in acting can be gained, like any other experience, by starting at the bottom. Consequently, a new society, with only a nucleus of experienced players, should not select a play demanding good character acting in the majority of parts, or one in which the small parts have considerable bearing on the play. Societies should not allow ambition to outrun discretion; and, while maintaining a high standard in their type of play, they must exercise a lot of thought before deciding on a final choice. Size of stage might inhibit a big production, and limited space at the side of the stage forbid many changes of scene. In the beginning, a selection committee should take advice from the man who is to assume responsibility, and be content to cut their coat according to their cloth.

#### FAMILIAR PLAYS.

Most societies find the task of play selection made easy by a prominent member of the selection committee who has opportunities for seeing London shows, and as he (or she) can always act as brilliantly as the London star, it is thought a good idea to do that play with the committee

member reproducing the accents and appearance of the London original. The idea does not usually materialize, but the player has satisfied ambition. Out of such selective methods little creative work will come, but somehow it does produce some tolerable imitative actors, who in due time and season develop their own style. But by that time the mould has formed, and the capacity to act has gone. Ability to perform remains, and so plays have to be built round a performance and each show is only a repetition of the last.

#### AGREED LISTS

Another method is for a number of people to make an individual selection, and then meet to pick out one. This meeting usually lasts for hours because each nominator thinks his nomination the best. It seldom occurs to such a group that a lot of breath would be saved if an "agreed list" were drawn up, and then given to the producer to produce as he found convenient. This method is most helpful, as it enables an alert producer to work ahead, and plan scenery, "props," and costumes in such a way that there is the maximum of use with a minimum of effort and cost.

Societies should beware of the "literary" play. There are many plays, some of them of first-class importance as literature, which *read* well, but act badly. They are traps inasmuch as they read so well, and the reader's mind functions so readily, that the difference between the *mental* picture and the *actual* appearance is overlooked. The bait and trap is usually in the dialogue, which is baited with ideas, brimming with wit, and full of happy allusion. But to develop the ideas requires words, and all dealers in ideas are not Shaws, and so what the mind assimilated, when translated to the actor, is slowed up and becomes a chunk of dreary polemic, without dramatic action. A case in point is C. K. Munro's *Rumour*, a powerful indictment of armaments, which, if acted as published, would have the audience sound asleep. But when it is pruned of its long dialectics, and tension is created, it is as good a play as any published within ten years of the date of its publication. So beware the literary and propaganda play until it has been made dramatic.

Debate is not drama, though drama can be in debate. The audience are interested in persons, not in abstract notions. If a society wants a play

with ideas, care should be taken that it is not mere "words, words, words," but conflict and personal tension as well.

#### ANGER POINTS

There are exceptionally fine plays with ideas, but because *An Enemy of the People* is a good play does not mean that a long dissertation about the human conscience is going to hold an audience seeking entertainment. *An Enemy of the People* is at once a good play, good ideas, and powerful drama because in addition to the ideas it has far more personal conflict than many a modern prize fight.

There are danger points in another sort of play, in which a vital part of the action is described but not explained in the stage directions. D. B. Wyndham Lewis once hit this off very well with his—

"Enter two men. They cross the stage looking as though they lived in Baham with a mother-in-law named Higgins."

While this may be extreme it has more than a likeness to some of the directions that are impossible of achievement. There is a certain play, by a reputable author, in which a room is described. Over the mantelpiece is a portrait of an ancestor, which, when the curtain rises on the first act, shows the ancestor as an elderly man of fierce and implacable aspect, but as the play develops his expression changes until he appears benign and philanthropic. As a practical stage direction it has no value because the attention of the audience is on the players, not the "props," even assuming that any property master alive could produce such a picture that was not obviously fake.

As a rule selection committees should avoid "spook" plays of serious purpose. Angels and ministers of grace may defend us, but have little effect on modern audiences, except, of course, when they appear in simple, unsophisticated moralities and such like. I have always felt that *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* was more Forbes-Robertson than the Stranger, and when, as in some thrillers, the ghostly actor has been the active principle, he was never accepted by the audience except on toleration and without prejudice. No audience would accept the effect of a fairy's wand, and no more is a ghost or spirit

actually acceptable except as a mere device, and a poor one at that. The modern mind relies on itself, and the spook, whether good angel or bad devil, has a hard time as a motive force. Apart from this critical aspect of construction, there are few amateurs who can carry the atmosphere of a mystic visitor; voice, deportment, gesture, and a way of wearing clothes, have to be just right to carry conviction, and it requires ability plus experience to make the ghostly appearances effective. Also, there is always the knowledge that the ghost is no ghost but really Jack Smith or Elsie Brown, and that the miraculous results of the intervention are due not to the angel, but to the stage manager, who will reproduce the miracle whenever and wherever you like. This must not be taken as eliminating all "spook" plays, but before a decision is made consideration should be given to the use of the spook, and how far the effects are reasonable and intelligent. Spooks in this category cover a multitude of stage devices such as wizards and witches. If the play is placed in the fifteenth century, and an angel or wizard kills a man by just pointing at him, it is credible, for that sort of belief was natural at the time, but to have a modern share rigger killed in his Park Lane library by the same means is too much to hope for in these days.

#### GRIP

The test of a play is its power to grip the mind of the spectator with the fortunes of the cast. In Greek Tragedy, the interest is concentrated on the visible personnel against the background of destiny, but though the end is known, the greatness of theme and the struggle against Fate provide us with the excitement or tension inherent in good drama. The same power of grip is necessary whether in comedy or farce, and selection committees should always look for this element, whether their object is to produce plays of consequence or mere amusement.

Another element is action. Drama must move. The time available is too short to allow of literary description, and where description comes in it must be relevant. A study of *Macbeth* will show this. That martlet haunted castle is described as part of the action; it is not mere description. It creates the atmosphere of peace, a peace soon to be disturbed.

It is this element of action that makes thrillers and such-like so attractive to play. Everything is obvious and to the point. That the point is not always a good one only emphasizes the excellent writing technique of a good thriller. If only playwrights with valuable ideas would exploit them with the same competence of technique, there would be little difficulty of selection.

#### DIALOGUES AND SITUATIONS

In the case of comedies, two things must be looked for, crisp dialogue and good situations. Do not rely too much on the epigram as read; it must be spoken correctly, and many a comedy, good in dialogue, weak in situation, has failed because of the loss of its epigrammatic flavour.

Inexperienced groups can nearly always get away with farces because of the boisterous character of the story. The theme of action is carried fully into effect, and the actor is a vehicle more or less satisfactory. Some farces are definitely built for a team, and it is dangerous for amateurs to try to repeat their success, but, generally speaking, when inexperience is a problem it is not a bad expedient to begin with a comedy.

Having selected the play, the next problem is to cast it. As to this no golden rule can be laid down for beginners. It is a good plan, however, to have an audition at which a selection committee, or the producer only, shall select his cast after seeing and hearing the individuals desiring to take up a part. It is debatable whether it is better to have the candidates for histrionic honours tested by a set piece or to let them "shoot" their own material. In the former case, the judges can see how the player can control and use material provided, but if it is not quite suitable the aspirant may appear at a disadvantage, not at all representative of actual possibilities. For my part, no matter how big the list of candidates, I like to hear and see them do both, and though it may mean about five auditions of *The Green Eye of the Little Yellow God* it is a method that does give a fairly good basis for selection. The producer should have a good say in selecting the cast, as he may see potentialities in an individual that he can bring out, or he may see a person as suitable for a certain part when the rough tests of an audition fail to bring out the qualities required.

One of the things an actor must be careful of,

if he wishes to develop his full talent, is not to allow producers to cast him because he is a "type." Nothing is more calculated to destroy artistic development than continually to be in parts that do not demand any creative work.

Producers should avoid the easy path of casting somebody who, without make-up, or any other art of the theatre, is "just the part." The job of the actor is to act, and the producer should produce, not merely present, a person in a particular part, which in turn is definitely acted. If an actor allows himself to be cast as a type eventually he will not know how to act; he will only be able to reproduce his type. I am not saying that appearance, and so on, should not be regarded, to a considerable degree, but a good actor can usually add art to Nature, and make-up counts for a great deal when it is intelligently applied. My objection to type casting is that an actor loses all sense of multiple character. Of course, there are people who are excellent as, say, duchesses or charwomen, and if the roles are reversed the result is not so good. It is all right so long as there are plays abounding with duchesses and charwomen.

#### THE WIDE NET

I give good advice in asking producers and actors to think in terms of the theatre and in terms of acting. Every producer should cast his net widely, mixing his players in parts, and avoiding stars as much as possible. This is difficult, I know, because when once a producer has found a good, reliable artist, he always wants to see that artist cast in the important roles. After all, the public is paying to see the best the society can do, and it is asking a lot that a known good actor should stand down for an unknown player. Nevertheless, producers should take a chance and if rehearsals show a woeful mis-cast then a change must be made. But a producer who does resist the easy way of the star system and type casting, will, in the course of six or seven productions, have a good all-round company more or less capable, according to their ability and his talent, of tackling anything in reason.

Another advantage of training for all-round acting strength is that the plague of matrimony, which so often depletes the ranks of an A.D.S., will not leave the producer entirely without leading man and woman resources.

## YORKIST

By NEVIL TRUMAN

Hon. Secretary, Nottingham Playgoers' Club

THE years from 1461 to 1485—the brief age of authority of the Yorkist Kings, Edward IV, Edward V, and Richard III, were not years of great change in costume, though they immortalized themselves by the startling codpiece, and are chiefly remembered for the ladies high-waisted gown. Hats remained as original as ever, the principal features being the delightful Butterfly for the women and the endless variety of low crowned hats for the men.

The *Doublet* (men) was worn to hip length only, but it had been developed by padding on the breast and back, the material being gathered into formal fluted folds and confined by the belt. The collar continued to be high, but was open at the front. The sleeves were tight, and extended to the wrist, but a hanging sleeve was added at will, with an elbow opening, through which the inner sleeve and arm were thrust, leaving the rest of the outer sleeve to dangle. After 1480 hanging sleeves became longer, and were often loosely looped together behind the back. At this date slashing came in, and revealed the embroidered shirt at the elbows and shoulders. The shoulders were artificially raised by padding, and the front of the doublet was opened to show the shirt, and loosely laced across the V.

The *Jerkin* (men) was also hip length. It could be extended to the middle of the thighs, but its sleeves were roomy and loose at the wrist, and were slit down the front seam to form long hanging sleeves. The slashings became much longer and larger, and often extended from the shoulder almost to the wrist, where in the earlier reigns they gave mere glimpses of the shirt.

The *Gown* (men) was the *houppelande* slightly modified. *Cloaks* (men) were sometimes worn, chiefly by older people.

The *Shirt* (men) came into its own, and was richly embroidered in black and red silk and (later) in gold thread. For the first time it had a definite neck band.

*Tights* (men) had the codpiece added, though

it had not the elaboration of the codpiece of the Tudor period. This codpiece was a stuffed small bag placed at the fork of the tights and fastened up by laced "points" or strings.

The *Houppelande* (women) was modified slightly and became tighter and more shaped to



KING RICHARD III

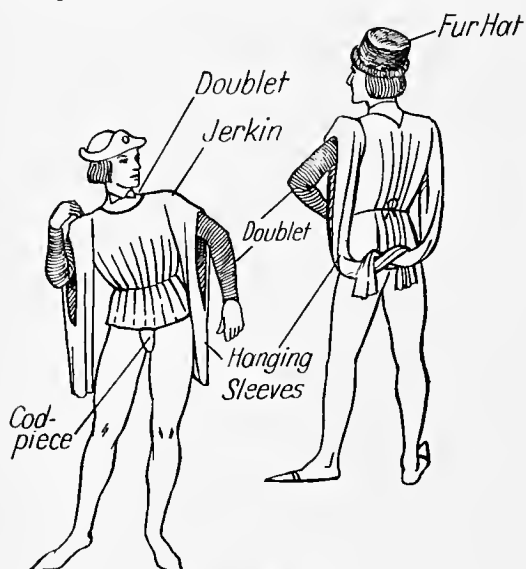
the body. Towards the end of this period it moulded the bust.

The *High-waisted Gown* (women) was the almost universal dress. It had a wide, gored skirt, with a train, and long, tight sleeves coming well over the wrist and hands, where it widened into a square cut cuff. It was trimmed with fur round the skirt bottom and the neck opening, and was finished off with a broad belt. The materials used were beautiful damask and tapestry patterns in brocade and rich silks of conventional design, which are still popular in our church furnishings. The pineapple, pomegranate, vine, and grape, together with leaves that are familiar on English trees, were utilized for these designs.

The principal changes were in the neck opening, which in 1460 was round, and which, in 1480, had become square. In the latter form it was so wide that it almost bared the shoulders

and gave that "slipping off" impression which so much intrigued the early Victorian men.

*Shoes* (men) had the toes stuffed with moss and hay and were the familiar *Poulaines*. From 1470 to 1480 the points were of immense lengths, and finished in a long needle point, which was sometimes pinned back over the shoe for convenience.



YORKIST MEN, 1480

*Hair* (men) was bobbed in an attractive fashion, but the Bowl crop of Henry V had definitely gone out of favour. The dandy wore his hair long over the forehead, even longer over the neck and nearly to the shoulders. The parting was in the middle.

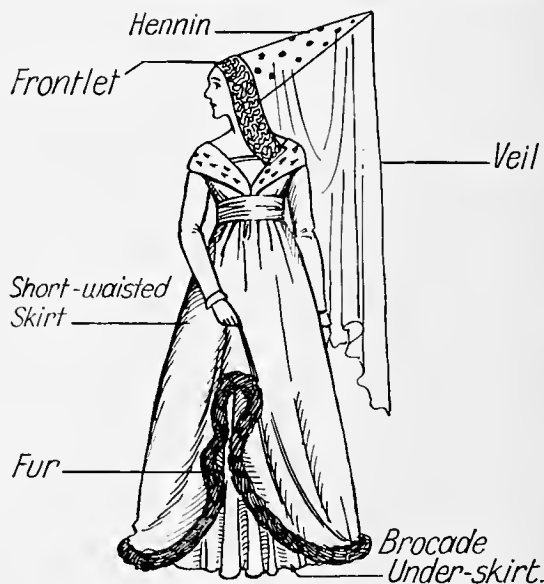
*Hair* (women) showed little, but it must not be assumed that because the veil and enormous head gear hid most of it, it was bundled up and stuffed into the gold net cauls. Contemporary illustrations show that the hair was carefully braided in square-crossing patterns.

*Hats* (men) were varied. The crowns were high or low; the brims narrow or broad. A conical hat was like a Turk's fez or, when longer, became a sugar loaf shape. The bycocket was pointed and pulled down in front, with a turned-up brim at the back, and was rather like the modern felt Trilby, with the exception that there was no dent in the top of the crown. It was mostly favoured by the sober, who dared not

wear the more fashionable small caps. Tall, upright, single ostrich feathers in front or at the back added to the fantasy. Jewelled hat bands and brooches kept the shape together, and maintained the turned-up brim for the wealthy. After 1475 a kind of "smoking cap," like the caps of the Victorians, was worn. It had a deep turn-up all round. The most popular types were the sugar-loaf and the low cap with turn-up.

*Hats* (women) were as elaborate as before.

A new type was the charming butterfly headdress, which was worn between 1450 and 1480. This was a floating gauze veil stretched over wires, which were tilted at the back of the head at an angle of 45 degrees. The gold net cap enclosed the hair, and was often placed at the extreme back of the head. It revealed the front hair, which was brushed back from the forehead.



THE HIGH-WAISTED DRESS

The frontlet sometimes covered this front hair, but it was made of white gauze instead of black velvet.

Another new type was the barbe, which was worn by older women. It was a veil over the head and sides of the face, with a kind of linen bib worn above or below the chin and covering the upper part of the chest. It was attached to a chin band, and was pleated in formal folds vertically. The whole gave a nun-like appearance.

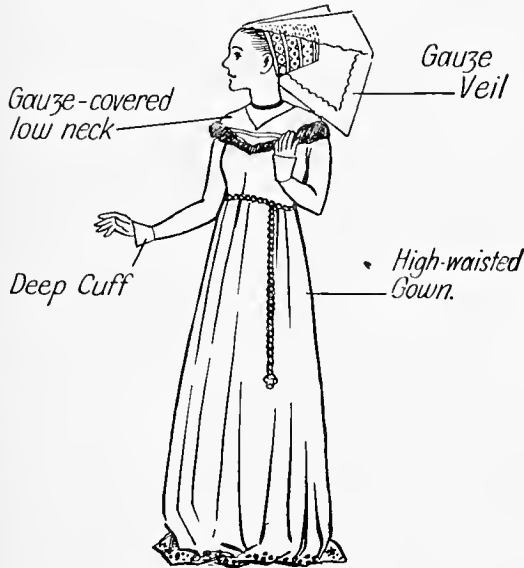






Ladies of the upper class covered the chin; others wore the band under the chin.

It is customary to dress this period in the acutely pointed steeple hats that are so familiar in manuscripts and illuminations, but in England this is not strictly correct. The genuine steeple was extensively worn on the Continent, but it was not popular in England. Perhaps the English women felt that its sharp point emphasized their own angularities. The steeple in our own country was generally rounded off at the end to make an elongated sugar loaf hat without the acute angled point. From all these hats floated the gauze or linen veils that were attached to the front. A small loop of string or material was seen exactly in the centre of the forehead. It rested on the bare skin, and is thought to have been placed there for convenience in pulling on the headdress.



BUTTERFLY HAT, 1478 (OULTON)

The beehive hat was a truncated sugar loaf with little gradation, and was smaller at the top of the crown. It was covered with a veil, which was tucked in closely to the hat.

Walking sticks began to be fashionable for the men.

## SUMMARY

### MEN

#### Dress

Doublet to 1480—padded, fluted, hip length,

30—(2477)

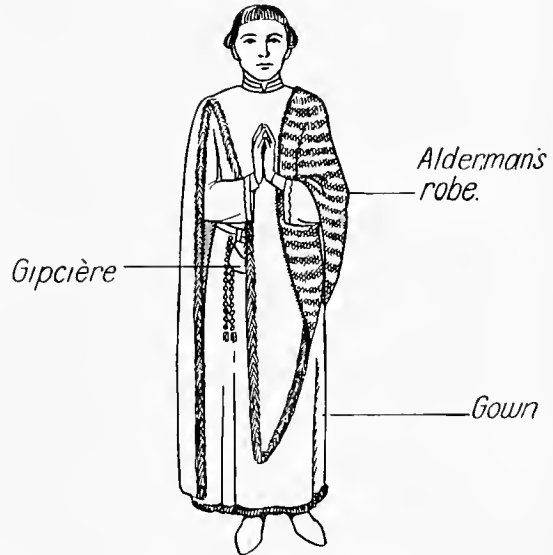
high open collar, close and/or hanging sleeves to wrist.

Doublet from 1480—open down breast, loosely laced across, high padded shoulders,

shirt shows at slashes of elbow and shoulders.

Jerkin—hip and mid-thigh length, roomy

sleeves, loose at wrist, slit down front



ALDERMAN FIELD, 1474 (LONDON)

seam to make long hanging sleeve, looped behind.

Gown—modified houppelande.

Cloaks—rare.

Shirt with neckband—embroidered 1480 onwards.

#### Legs

Tights and codpiece.

#### Feet

Immense needle points 1470–80, then fade out.

Stuffed toes.

Poulaines.

#### Hair

Long over forehead and nearly to shoulders.

Bobbed.

No bowl crops.

#### Hats

Crowned—high or low

Brimmed—narrow or broad.

Conical—fez or long sugar loaf.  
Tall upright ostrich feather, front or back.  
Bycocket—"Robin Hood" type.  
Jewelled hat bands and brooches.

*Hats*

Forked with veil.  
Beehive with veil.  
Butterfly 1450-80 with veil and/or frontlet.

*Bycocket**Turban*

"Smoking caps" with deep turn-up, after 1475.

*WOMEN**Dress*

Houppelande—tighter and, later, moulded to form.

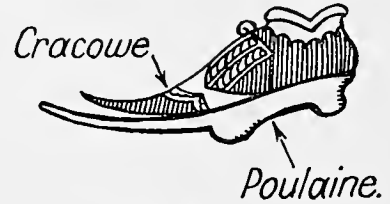
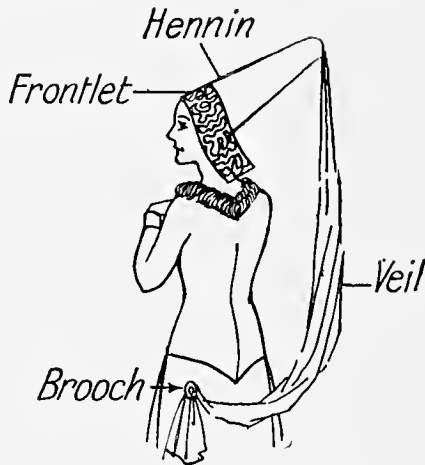
High waisted gown—neck 1460 round; neck 1480 square, almost bare shoulders. Long right sleeves, widened at wrist to square cuff. Broad belt, fur trimming.

*Hair*

Concealed under hat, but braided to show through.



THE BARBE

*Cracowe**Poulaine.**Chaperon slung over shoulder.*

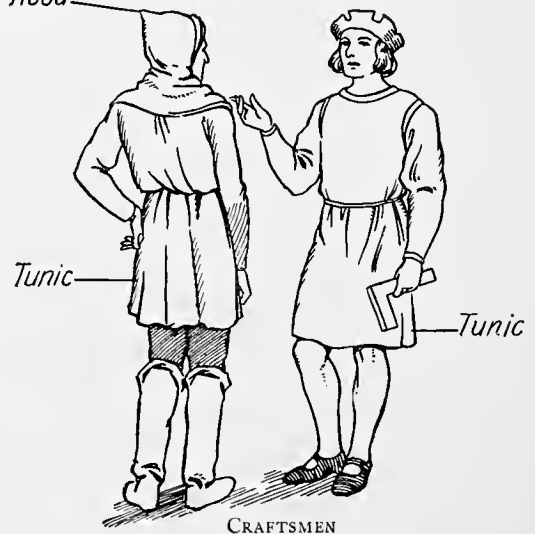
Hennin 1460-70 or steeple, not sharp pointed, with veil.

Wimple for widows.

Barbe—wimple with linen bib and chin band, vertically pleated.

*PEASANTS*

As in previous reign.

*Hood**Tunic**Tunic*

CRAFTSMEN

## WIGS, TRANSFORMATIONS, ETC.

By ALFRED HARTOP.

*Perruquier and Lecturer to Amateur Societies*

IN many historical plays, Court scenes, and character parts, a wig becomes a necessary and an indispensable part of make-up; in fact, in all cases where a definite change of hair colour, a characteristic style of hairdressing, or the creation of an abnormal type of head, is desired, a wig designed to convey the correct impression must be employed. Wigs of all descriptions—national and period types, Court periwigs and perukes, legal, modern types of full growth or any degree of baldness, eccentric and fantastic character types—are obtainable to meet every conceivable demand.

According to style, wigs are usually made on two main principles. As moderate skill is called for in adjusting a wig so that it will remain unmoved on the head under reasonable stage conditions, consideration of these principles will be helpful.

The simpler styles are those that provide a full head of hair the front part of which forms a fringe over the forehead. The hair is knotted on a cap-shaped foundation of net or calico; and the wig is held in position on the head by spring grips, attached to the foundation at the temples, and a band of elastic at the nape of the neck. This style of wig should not be put on and adjusted until after the face has been made up and powdered, and the natural hair brushed back so that it is completely hidden beneath the wig. The correct way to adjust a wig is to hold the back edge with both hands, to place the front edge in position on the forehead, and then carefully to envelop the head by pulling the elastic band down on to the neck. Should a wig fail to hide completely the natural hair at the temples, behind the ears, or on the neck, so that a contrast in colour is noticeable, the hair will require to be painted to match the wig.

Wigs made on the second and more general principle have, at the front, a flesh tinted silk fabric band, which fits across the forehead to give better security, a closer fit, and a far more natural

appearance. Wigs of this type are known as "blender" wigs, probably because it is necessary to blend the forehead band with the complexion make-up so that the edge of the band is not apparent.

Effectually to conceal the join a wig having a well-fitting blending band is essential. The least slackness will cause the band to lift from the forehead and to break the join. If the band is too tight a roll of flesh will appear whenever the brow is moved. In order to obviate trouble arising from either of these faults it is necessary, in the first place, to supply the wigmaker with accurate head measurements. Secondly, the wig should be tried on in time to remedy any misfit. Should the wig be too large, a centre tuck, or two side tucks, inserted in the foundation at the back will generally give a better fit. The forehead band can be tightened by making small tucks at the temples, exactly at the point where the hair begins. Although, when sending out wigs wigmakers generally supply them too large rather than too small, sometimes a wig is too small. If it cannot be adequately enlarged by removing the elastic grip at the back, a larger wig should be obtained.

Joining-paste (sometimes named wig-paste) is required to fix the blending band to the skin and to hide the edge of the join. This preparation is similar in appearance to grease paint, but is less greasy and possesses adhesive qualities. It is made in different flesh tints, and sold in sticks bearing either its name or Nos. 17, 18, or 19.

A blender-wig is fitted to the head by holding it at the back and adjusting the forehead band to a correct position about the middle of the forehead, the side grips being in line with the front of the ears. Although it is not advisable to put the wig on before making up the face, it is necessary that it should be fitted before the make-up of the forehead is completed, so that the band may be blended with the foundation. The best results are achieved when the operations take the

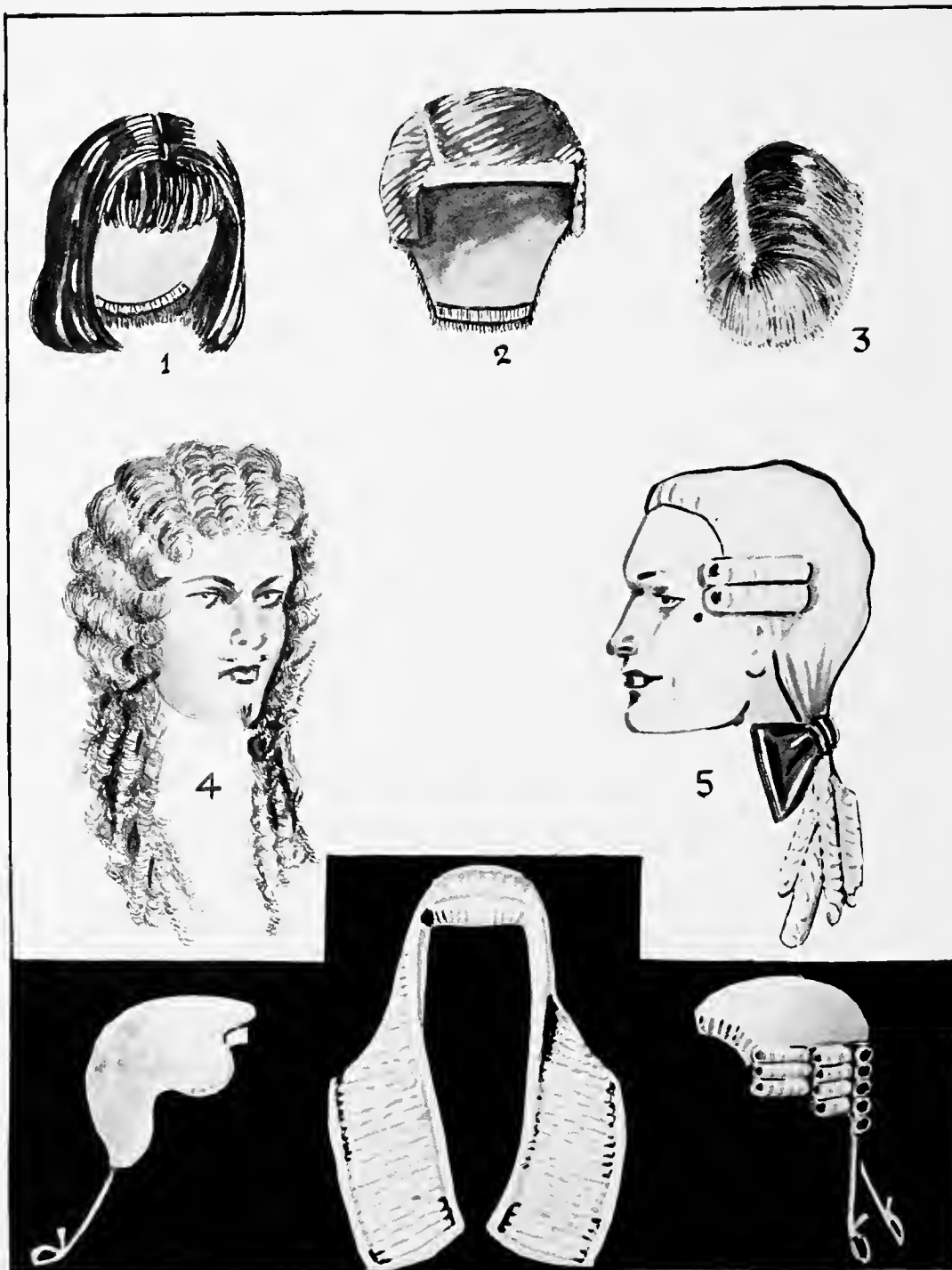


FIG. 19. WIGS FOR MEN

1. Open type of wig  
2. Blender type of wig

3. Toupee or toupet  
4. A periwig

5. A peruke  
Legal types: Bench, Court, Bar



FIG. 20. HAIR PIECES AND WIGS FOR WOMEN

- |   |                     |                           |
|---|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. A bandeau or frontlet                        | 3. Pin waves        | 5. Long plaits            |
| 2. A group of pin-curls                         | 4. A simple chignon | 6. A Court style coiffure |
| 7. A transformation. Blending with natural hair |                     |                           |

following order. First try on the wig, mark the position of the blending band edge, and then remove the wig. Apply the face make-up, carrying the foundation on the forehead a trifle beyond the limit that will be covered by the wig band, then powder all parts except the forehead. Next, apply a fairly thick coating of joining-paste along the forehead where the join line will fall, adjust the wig, and press flat the joining band so that its edge is fastened with the paste.

Do not pull the wig down too tightly or it may contract the tension, or slip with subsequent movements of the head and spoil a satisfactory joining. To avoid this relieve the tension by bending the neck backwards and raising the brows, before finally making the surface joining.

Now, spread a coating of joining-paste along the edge of the band and smooth out the band until the joining of the fabric and skin is completely hidden, using, perhaps, a touch of grease to avoid the paste sticking to the fingers. Cover the paste joint with foundation grease paint, and carry it up to the hair-line of the wig. The same foundation colour as that used on the skin may appear to be darker on the blender; therefore, the latter should be a trifle paler than the face. The application of powder over the whole forehead will complete the obliteration to perfection.

In extreme cases, where the joining band persists in remaining off the forehead, more drastic measures may be employed. Spirit gum will, of course, fix a band securely, though it should be used sparingly at the temples and allowed to become almost dry before the band is pressed to it. Then saturation and hardness of the fabric of the wig will be avoided. When the wig has been correctly adjusted, a more lifelike appearance may be given to the hair by applying a few touches of brillantine, and then combing or brushing it after the manner of natural hair. Always remove the wig from the back and turn inside out to prevent a soiled and disarranged condition of the hair.

#### TOUPEES

The toupee, or toupet, is an ingenious form of semi-wig that is designed more especially for men in order to cover baldness on the top of the head (see Fig. 19 (3)). It is so constructed that the false hair blends with the natural hair, and

for this reason the hair of the toupee must match exactly the colour of the natural hair. Naturalness in appearance and lightness in wear are primary features. Moreover, the position of a toupee can be adjusted in several ways to produce dissimilar effects in style of hairdressing. Places are provided on the foundation for the application of an adhesive to hold the toupee securely in position, suitable fixatives being joining-paste or spirit gum.

#### HAIR PIECES FOR WOMEN

Although, generally speaking, women have not to use wigs to the same extent as men, there will always be occasions when natural deficiencies of colour, length, or other characteristic will call for supplementary aid to effect a necessary change. Apart from Court wigs, periods, and modern "aged" types (cases which, obviously, necessitate the wearing of a wig) there is a more frequent need to make less elaborate change of hairdressing, mainly in regard to fringes, curls or ringlets, coils or bobs, which are not generally found on bobbed or shingled heads. Many effective changes to the appearance can be made by the use of simple hair pieces that are constructed from crêpe-hair, prepared in the method previously described, or purchased ready made.

Fig. 20 illustrates a few extremely adaptable forms that will solve many hairdressing problems. No. 1 is a waved bandeau, or frontlet, which is useful to add to the front of existing waves.

Pin-curls and waves may be used as side pieces to be worn in front of the ears and against the cheeks; as fringe pieces they are worn on the forehead so as to fall in an attractive manner over the eyes (see 2, 3, and 6).

The chignon is worn on that part of the head between the crown and the nape of the neck; therefore, it is a valuable aid in concealing a shingled head. No. 4 gives a general suggestion, which may be adapted to curls, rolls, or bobs.

The transformation is one of the most popular of heavy forms of postiche. The principle of the construction of a transformation is that the inner part, or crown of the wig, is absent, an outer rim foundation providing the necessary support of the hair. Thus the full effect of a wig, without the discomfort that may be caused by wearing it, is obtained.

## DIMMERS

By C. HAROLD RIDGE, A.R.S.M., D.I.C., and F. S. ALDRED, A.M.Inst.C.E.

*Consulting Engineers*

THE latest designs of dimmers use an insulated rod passing out of the top of the pot for connexion to the bottom cone, thus avoiding washers and possible leaks. Electrodes may be of other designs, and may be made of wrought or cast iron for alkaline solutions, and lead for acid solutions. Each is fitted with a terminal, to which the leads are connected, and, if direct current is being used, the bottom electrode should be connected to the cable from the lamp, the other to the negative cable. The top electrode can be raised or lowered by operating the handle of the winch, which is mounted on the frame top, the resistance offered to the passage of the current varying as the distance between the electrodes is varied. As it is impossible completely to cut out the resistance when the plates are together, a short-circuiting device, in the form of a switch connected in parallel with the dimmer, can be used. This closes automatically as the electrodes come together, and provides an alternative path of negligible resistance for the current.

The electrolyte generally employed is a solution of common washing soda, but diluted sulphuric acid, or salt solution, may be used, these reagents being added to increase the conductivity of the water, which can be used alone with voltages over 1000. Liquid dimmers should stand on insulating trays, and they may be below the stage or in any other convenient position. When they are away from the switchboard, they are controlled by tracker wires, which are brought up over pulleys to the board with a winch for each dimmer. The winches can be arranged so that each can be operated individually, or by locking the shaft the whole or any desired number can be operated together by means of a master controller. Standard liquid dimmers, complete with insulating shackles and flexible connexion to a porcelain block, and terminal plate mounted on a teak base and with insulating tray, cost about £4 and £6 respectively for the 40- and 80-ampere sizes.

For the amateur, liquid dimmers have the

advantage that they can be made up by a handyman at a cost of a few shillings, according to the ingenuity of the maker. The grading that is required for accurate colour mixing (already mentioned) is obviously impossible with a liquid dimmer. When designing such a dimmer, first decide on the materials that are to be used. For small dimmers on circuits up to 5 amperes a large pickle jar will probably suffice. For circuits up to 10 amperes an ordinary drain pipe is convenient, the large end being closed with a cement bottom or by a tile cemented in. For 30-ampere circuits large earthenware pipes, 48 in. in height and 12 in. in diameter, may be used, or, better still, the pot may be cast in cement to any desired size. The containers can be obtained for about 30s. each. The cone electrodes can be cast in lead; or, if this is too troublesome, flat iron plates may be used. When plates are employed the surface should be machined smooth. The electrode depends on the material at hand and the facilities that are available for working it. The next question to settle is the size of the plates. The current density should never exceed one ampere a square inch; half an ampere is a convenient value. Thus, for a dimmer taking a maximum current of 20 amperes the plates or cones should have an area of at least 20 sq. in. at the point of contact. If they have a greater area so much the better. The top plate should be heavy, as when the plates rest together gas is generated. This tends to force them apart, and if this happens the lights will flicker. The quantity of liquid is based on the minimum amount that is necessary to absorb the heat generated, and to prevent boiling. It is about one cubic inch per watt for dimmers up to 10 amperes capacity and half a cubic inch per watt for the larger sizes. The minimum diameter for a dimmer vessel is fixed by the size of the plates and the minimum height by the distance at which they are to be separated. It remains to be seen if this allows room for the electrolyte, according to the preceding rule. Should it be too small, the

diameter, or height, or both, must be increased. A reference to Fig. 35 will show how the apparatus is made. The lower electrode rests on the bottom of the vessel; from this a rod rises to the surface of the liquid, and is connected to the electric supply. This rod must be insulated by rubber tubing slipped over it. In small dimmers

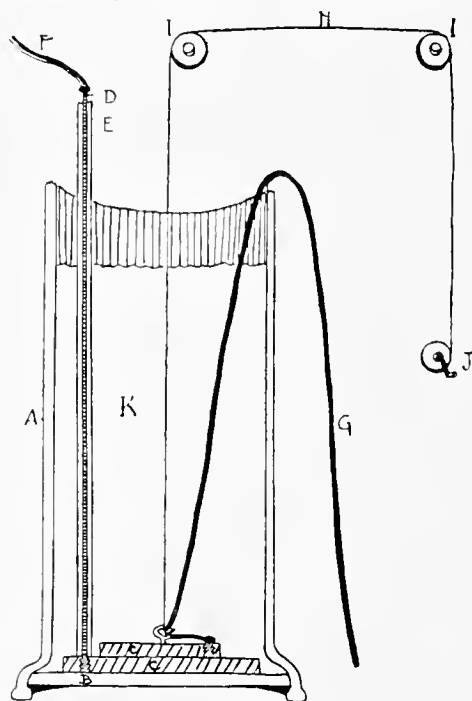


FIG. 35

the top plate may be raised and lowered by means of the insulated cable that is attached to it and that runs over a pulley, but care must be taken to prevent the weight being taken on the electric connexion. For large dimmers the cable that is required will be too large and stiff to run over the pulley. A cord should be used, the cable being left free, but the electric connexion again being protected by fixing the cable at a point a few inches from it. The dimmer is shown arranged for distant control.

A number of rules could be given for the strength of the electrolyte, but it is better to adjust it by trial and error. The jar should be filled with water, to within about 9 in. of the top, with the electrodes in contact with each other, and the lamps it is required to dim should then be

switched on. A slight separation of the plates will be sufficient to put the lamps out. Add a quantity of a saturated solution of washing soda, and stir well. A greater separation of the plates is necessary to obtain the same result. For the best working the strength of the electrolyte should be such that the electrodes are separated to their full extent to bring the lights from full on to off. A few hours spent in experimenting with a dimmer of this kind, using different loads, is more useful to the beginner than any amount of description. Many other chemicals can be used as electrolytes, but some of them give off unpleasant gases, and their use for dimmers made on the above plan is not advisable.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF LIQUID DIMMERS

The latitude of liquid dimmers is far greater than that of the metallic variety, one reason for this being that when used for heavy loads they have the advantage of the smooth action of a sliding contact metallic resistance.

As an instance of this, think of a dimmer adjusted to dim a load of 1000 watts, the plates being separated 36 in. in the process.

If a load of 2500 watts is now dimmed down it will be found that the plates will have to be separated only about 12 in. instead of 36, and care will be necessary to prevent the lights going down in jerks, especially at the start. In all probability it will be impossible with the greater load to get quite full light, even when the electrodes are touching. If the solution is strengthened to suit the greater load the lights will be only half out on the small load. When loads are varied in this way, the dimmer must be designed for the larger, but the electrolyte adjusted for the smaller.

A dimmer when kept in action for a long time with the plates in contact is liable to cause a flicker in the lamps, due to gas, generated between the plates, forcing them apart. The use of a heavy top-plate minimizes this, but the better method is to have a short-circuiting device to operate when the electrodes are together.

If a dimmer is overloaded for any length of time the liquid will boil and be expelled violently from the pot, not only causing a mess, but putting the lights out of action. Violent sparking may also take place between the electrodes, and if



someone rushes to the rescue with a bucket of water and pours it into the pot he will receive a violent shock.

It is easy to design the dimmer to have sufficient capacity to prevent this overheating, and then it will be safe and reliable.

Overheating in a metallic resistance is much

raised only about 18 in., and the increased pull that is required necessitates the use of counterbalancing weights if there are many dimmers. On the older switchboards, with 15-in. diameter control wheels making a half revolution, a much greater movement of electrode was possible, but it was still of fixed extent.

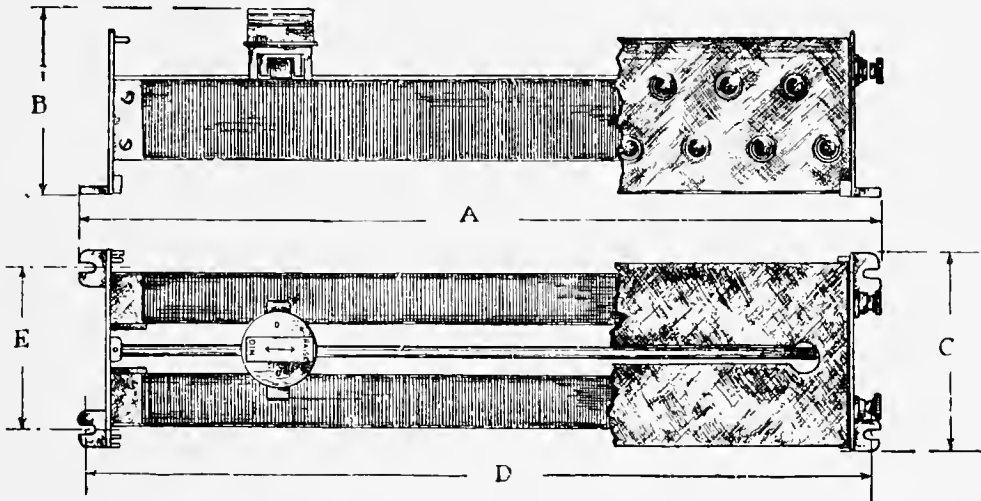


FIG. 36

*Mansell & Ogan, Ltd.*

more serious, and may be the cause of an electric fire. In dealing with an electric fire, water is useless; buckets of dry sand should be kept ready. Obviously, the current should be switched off, but if this is impossible, the sand may stop arcing and the spread of the fire.

An amateur stage is often equipped with one or two large dimmers that are used in the way just described, where the travel can be varied to suit the load, but the professional cannot adopt this method, nor can the amateur if he has a large number of dimmers to work together by master control. In the professional theatre the majority of dimmers are metallic. They have a definite travel, and have to be operated in conjunction with the liquid, which must, therefore, also have a definite travel.

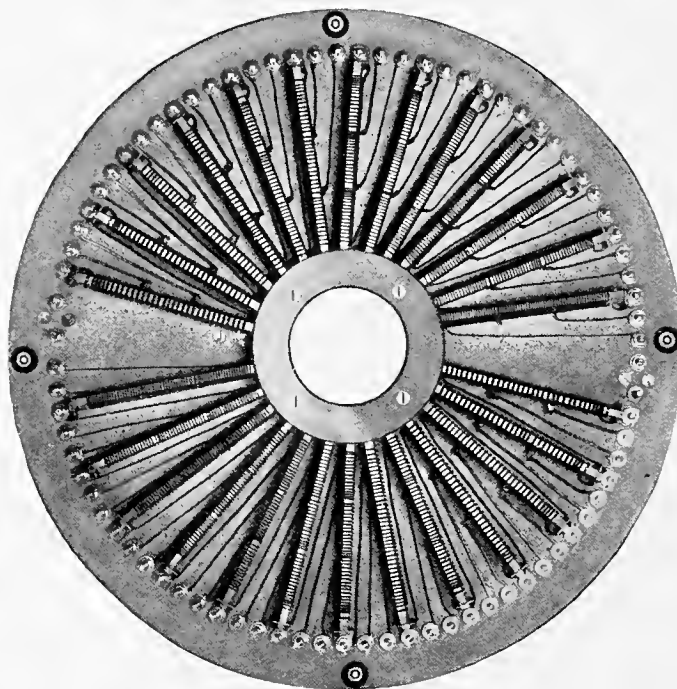
The control wheels on a modern switchboard are frequently of only 6 in. diameter, and make but half a revolution from full on to off. It is therefore usual to use a jockey pulley in the run of tracker wire to double the electrode movement. Even then the electrode will be

#### METALLIC DIMMERS

The simplest form of a metallic or wire-wound dimmer is the slider type, in which copper-nickel resistance wire is wound on two parallel lengths of non-conducting heat-resisting material, such as slate or vitreous enamelled steel tubing. The size and amount of wire are calculated to give the dimming required, and graded to take the heavier currents flowing in the circuit at the earlier stages, decreasing in size to the final stages when the current is at a minimum. The wire is wound on the two lengths, and mounted in a frame a short distance apart. A sliding contact or brush of laminated phosphor-bronze slides along these lengths and connects them in series. When the slider is at the terminal ends of the two coils, it simply connects them together and there is no resistance in the circuit, but as it slides away the current path is from one terminal through the resistance wire to the slider and so to the other coil and back to the other terminal, the total amount of resistance in the circuit increasing as the slider moves along. Fig. 36

shows a modern slider type dimmer in which the wire coils, the sliding contact spanning the coils, and the terminals at the end for connecting up are clearly seen. To prevent the hand from coming into contact with the coils, which get very hot, a cover (shown broken off in Fig. 36) is fitted, with a slot through which the contact

The dimmer generally used for stage switchboards in modern installations is of the stud contact pattern in which the resistance wire is wound into coils supported on insulators on a metal frame, and the ends are connected to metal studs, over which an arm carrying a contact brush is moved, thus inserting or taking out resistance



*Mansell & Ogan, Ltd*

FIG. 37

grip passes, and with holes in the sides for ventilation. The fixing lugs at the ends are for bolts for wall mounting, or for attaching to the iron framework of a switchboard.

In this case the slider is hand-operated, but operation by a worm driven by a hand wheel can be arranged. Slider dimmers do not easily lend themselves to interlocking, and on this account they are not generally used on switchboards of any size, but they are light in weight, simple and relatively cheap, and are, therefore, useful for small installations, portable switchboards, or for the local control of individual lighting units. They can be obtained for capacities ranging from about 60 watts at a cost of 30s. up to 3000 watts costing about £6.

as it travels. There are many different arrangements in design and methods of operation—all similar in principle. In some designs the coils are carried on a rectangular iron frame connected to studs arranged in an arc of a circle and have the contact brush attached to the end of an arm swinging about a pivot fixed at the other end. This arm is connected to the operating handle by a metal strap or link. Such an arrangement is usually spoken of as a radial arm dimmer. Another, and probably the best, pattern is the plate type dimmer, in which the wire coils are wound on formers, fixed radially on a circular plate, and connected to substantial brass contact studs set at a radius, as shown in Fig. 37.

## FIRES AND CONFLAGRATIONS

By A. E. PETERSON

*Founder, Sunday Night Adventurers; Secretary, Kingston Marionette Players, etc.*

IN a great number of interior scenes there is a fireplace. Many amateur societies build their fireplaces in pairs, and fasten them together back to back. One side may represent the massive grandeur of marble with an electric fire that is the real thing, whilst the opposite may be the simple homely kitchen grate complete with oven and boiler, the fire in which is suggested by crumpled red tissue paper with two or three small electric lamps or a couple of flash lamps hidden amongst it to supply the glow.

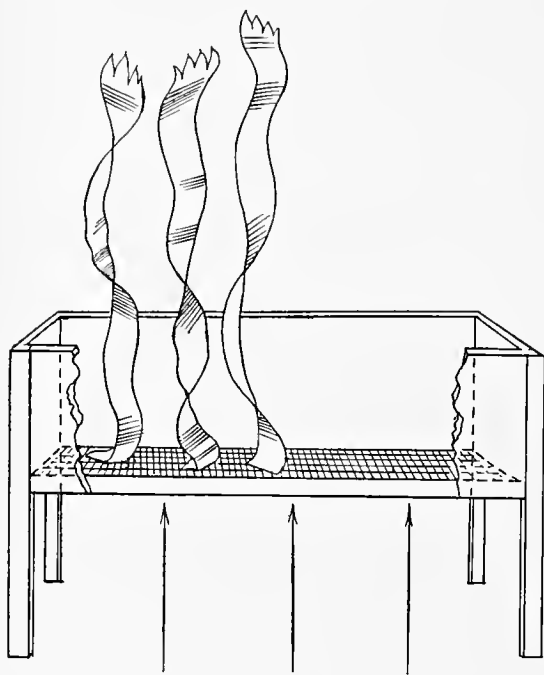
The actual kindling of a fire is seldom seen. The fire is usually burning when the scene opens, but there are plays where it is necessary for the proper development of atmosphere to make a "real" fire. This fire is like many other stage realisms—illusion. This is how an effective stage fire was produced. The scene was the interior of a cottage, and the fireplace was painted on the backcloth. Behind the cut out bars of the grate was a wooden box to the back of which was fastened a long piece of cardboard. The cardboard and the top of the box were painted black to represent the fire back. A stage hand seated on a chair supplied all the "effects." As the fuel was placed in position from the front the stage hand surreptitiously thrust amongst it an electric lamp that had been dipped red and switched it on when the lighted match was applied. The match was dropped where it could safely burn out. The flicker of flames was supplied by an assistant who allowed the light from the red bulb to escape through his fingers, which he opened and closed, and who occasionally removed his hands from the light, which he covered with both hands. The crackle of burning wood was made by a small wooden clapper, similar to that with which children play, but instead of it being twirled round and round it was slowly moved in a jerky manner. A much simpler method of making this kind of noise is to smack two, three, or four fingers of one hand into the palm of the other, varying the sound to suit the needs of the moment. The

impression of a smoky chimney was suggested by a wad of smudging cotton wool contained in a tin smoke box shaped like a trumpet. The wool was kept alight by blowing down the narrow end, and a wave of the smoke box just behind the top of the cut out portion of the scene sent a plume of smoke that was visible to the audience and that caused the old lady making the fire to cough and splutter.

A drawing room interior requires a more artistic fire effect. The fire may be a real electric fire with a translucent top made of chunks of coloured glass, underneath which is fitted a revolving fan to suggest flames. A fire of this description should be placed where it is easily seen, and the effect is improved if the fire is lit with a red floodlight. The flood should be placed so that the light is thrown upstage, and the source of this additional light should be carefully concealed from the audience. Care should also be taken to ensure that there is not too much glow for the size of the fire.

Another well tried device is the fire with a flame effect that is supplied by lengths of flame coloured silk, which are agitated by means of an electric fan and lit up with a small electric lamp. This effect seems to have originated with the old-fashioned serpentine or skirt dance. The dancer was dressed in a voluminous white skirt, at each side of which was sewn a long, thin cane, the upper end of which she held in order to manipulate her skirts. As she danced and twirled round and round she waved intricate designs of half circles and whirls, which were made to suggest flames by having coloured limes thrown on her. Sometimes the dancer would stand with arms outstretched whilst pictures of butterflies were thrown on her dress by a magic lantern or sciopticon, and by gently moving her arms the butterfly was made to appear to be moving its wings. Then someone thought of placing the dancer on a pedestal through the top of which a red floodlight threw its glare upwards and made the fire effect

more real. This effect was further improved by utilizing the electric fan. The flame dancer stood upon a grating through which came a miniature gale of wind in which she played small scarves and larger streamers. Eventually she moved into the centre of the current of air and released the many silken flames that were attached to her dress.



WIND FROM FAN

Confetti and small discs of tinfoil were cast into the wind passage. These, flying upwards, gave an impression of sparks that added greatly to the effect. As the force of the wind was gradually diminished the dancer slowed down her movements and drooped on the stage as the fire gradually died down.

If it is necessary to stage a scene where a witch is burned at the stake or to show, say, St. Joan being put to death, the pyre can be actually built on the stage in sections, which, although they may seem to be carelessly thrown together, will really be carefully arranged according to plan. In the pyre are arranged batteries of fans that are connected to separate switches. The angles at which the blades of fan are fixed determine the direction of the flames, and although the silk streamers may

be fastened to the guard of the fan it is better to use a wooden frame with a wire mesh bottom to which the streamers are attached. With a number of fans rotating together the flames can be controlled by fixing sliding covers underneath or over the wire mesh and releasing these at the proper time. In the centre of the pyre long streamers of dark silk to represent smoke may be placed. Small red floods will add to the general effect. Strips of tinfoil placed where they will catch and reflect the red light and a few small red glow-lamps that are rapidly switched on and off, with the addition of confetti thrown into the fans, give a suggestion of reality that can be enhanced by the clapping of hands to imitate the sound of cracking sparks. A turn or two of the wind machine supplies the roar of hungry flames, which may also be suggested by a slight rumble of the thunder sheet. If the stage is large enough, it is wise to stage a spectacle of this description as a tableau. This will allow the scene to be set beforehand, and enable it to be well rehearsed before the actual production. Electric fans are made in many sizes and can be hired at reasonable cost.

A camp fire, such as is built by gipsies, boy scouts, or soldiers, can be made of logs. Small pieces of wire netting, such as is used for enclosing poultry runs, are rolled into cylindrical form, about twelve inches long by three inches diameter, and tied. A sheet of brown paper that has been torn has the torn portions repaired with red transparent paper. The brown paper with the repaired side inside is wrapped around the wire log and glued in position. The brown paper may be painted to resemble bark, and the ends may be circular pieces of cardboard to give the log a stiffening. A couple of flash lamps fastened inside convey the impression of burning wood, or the bulbs may be connected to a battery. A red light in the centre of the fire throws a glow on the faces of the campers if required.

Conflagrations are not now so popular as they used to be. The stage fires of old were real fires built on the stage in huge braziers and they were allowed to burn fiercely, the only safety arrangement being a fireman who stood ready to quench the flames with a firehose.

This is how a modern stage fire was arranged in *The Rising Sun*, by Heijermans. The fire occurs at the end of the third act. Sonia, the

daughter of Matthew Strong, takes a lighted lamp in her hand to see her way in the dark of the shop, off stage, to fetch a drinking glass. The glass is on a shelf. She, reaching up to get it, drops the lamp, and the shop is soon blazing furiously. There is a shriek, followed by the sound of breaking glass. Matthew jumps up and exclaims "Good heavens, the shop's on fire." Then through the inside windows that divide the living room from the shop the red glare of fire is seen. Smoke pours in, there is the sound of more breaking glass, the clocks strike nine, there is a cry of "Fire! Fire!" from the street, and amidst a scene of frenzied confusion the curtain falls.

In the next act the same room is seen after it has been gutted by fire. The water soddened debris conveys a sense of desolation that is intensified by the sound of water drip-drip-dripping from the room above where a child has been burnt to death. The dialogue is punctuated by the sound of the water as it falls into a large white enamel bowl set well down stage. Repetition of the sound is driving Sonia mad, and she confesses that the accident to the lamp could have been prevented. Eventually her confession is repeated to the policeman who has brought the coroner's authorization for the burial of the dead child.

The crash of the breaking glass was made by dropping an empty wine bottle on a brick placed in the bottom of a box to prevent the broken glass from spreading. The red glare of fire was made by burning a red flare in a bucket, and the smoke was made by lighting a smoke case. The lamp itself had a glass body containing water, and the light was supplied by igniting a piece of wick that had just previously been soaked in paraffin.

The flash of an explosion off can be made by using one of the compositions which, when lit, burns with a bright flash, and a small explosion actually on the stage can be made by blowing lycopodium powder into a spirit flame.

The apparatus for this consists of a small pipe that passes through the stage, or a rubber ball can be trodden on by one of the actors when the flash of the explosion is required.

The manufacturer of Bengal lights must have reaped a rich harvest in the past and found the theatre his most profitable customer. For most plays some kind of fire effect was required. In

*The Dumb Girl of Genoa* an inn is attacked by robbers and "The soldiers are seen combating enveloped in flames." In *The Woodman's Hut* one saw "The whole Forest and the Hut in Flames" and the grand finale consisted of a "thrilling escape of the Count and Amelia over the Burning Bridge." As a variation to the almost universal use of red fire the staging of *The Flying Dutchman*, written by Edward Fitzball, must have been welcome, as during the play the frequent entrances and exits of Vanderdecken were heralded by bursts of blue fire. In the first act there were three occasions when this effect was used. The close of the act was arranged as follows. "MUSIC. Peter attempts to snatch the letter, when it EXPLODES. A sailor is about to seize Vanderdecken, who eludes his grasp, and VANISHES through the deck. Tom Willis fires on (r), Von Swiggs on (l). A sailor falls dead on the deck. Vanderdecken, with a demoniac laugh, rises from the sea in blue fire, amidst violent thunder. At that instant the PHANTOM SHIP appears in the sky behind. Vanderdecken and the Crew in consternation exclaim 'Ah VANDERDECKEN—VANDERDECKEN' as the curtain hastily closes." In the second act there is a remarkable display of Vanderdecken's supernatural power. He waves his hand "and a small rose-coloured flame descends on the sentinel's gun. He retreats in terror," and the effects at the close of the act must have caused the stage manager some sleepless nights. Here is the stage picture. "(STORM.) A mist begins to arise, through which Vanderdecken is seen crossing the open sea in an open boat with Lestelle, from L U E. The storm rages violently. The boat is dashed about on the waves. It SINKS suddenly with Vanderdecken and Lestelle. The PHANTOM SHIP appears (*à la phantasmagorie*) in a peal of thunder. The stage and the audience part in total darkness." The end of the play sees Vanderdecken descending through the stage to the accompaniment of RED fire, probably a concession to popular taste.

Coming to more modern times, one of the most famous thrills of last century was the production of the fine old play *The Still Alarm*. In this play one saw the interior of a fire station with its waiting engines and fire escapes, and in the rear two horses in their stalls. The alarm rang and amidst a scene of great excitement the horses

were harnessed and quickly dashed out. The horses used in the production were specially trained for their work, and it was a remarkable sight to see them, immediately the alarm rang, quietly leave their stalls and place themselves in position underneath the suspended harness in readiness for the word of command, which usually came 6 to 8 seconds after the alarm first rang.

The tendency of some dramatists to adapt—after the lapse of a reasonable time and with suitable alterations—current events as a basis for their work may possibly be influenced by the recent fire-raising disclosures, but whether the dramatist will deem it necessary actually to stage

spectacles showing conflagrations in progress remains to be seen. Fashions in plays are constantly changing. Old plays such as *East Lynne* and *The Lady of the Camellias* are staged and dressed in the times when they were first produced, period plays are coming into their own again, and with the annual advent of pantomime, with its occasional use of Bengal lights and flares, it is quite within the bounds of possibility that we may once more be thrilled at the sight of the Devil claiming his own in a blaze of red fire and disappearing through a trapdoor in the stage to the accompaniment of much rumbling from the thunder sheet.

# PROPERTIES

By DUMAYNE WARNE

*Author (with Phil Forsyth) of "The House," "The Ultimate Revue," "Second Thoughts," etc.*

**P**ROPERTIES, to the professional, mean all the things that go on the stage, other than scenery or electrical equipment. Amateurs mostly think of them vaguely as the hundred and one odd things, other than furniture—that is, books, revolvers, inkwells, etc., which have to be gathered together before a show.

Actually, properties fall into four classes. These are—

1. *Furniture*

This includes carpets.

2. *Small Properties*

These are mostly for dressing the stage, but are not as large or cumbersome as furniture. Vases, clocks, etc.

3. *Personal Properties*

Watches, walking-sticks, handkerchiefs, note-cases.

4. *Hand Properties*

Revolvers, lanterns, pens.

But it is not of great importance what they are called so long as nothing required for the production is forgotten.

The best way of ensuring that everything is remembered is to make someone definitely responsible for properties; in other words, to appoint a Property Master. He may be selected for each production, if more than one is given during the season, or elected annually, like any other official of the society.

His duties are, as the name suggests, to see that all the properties that are necessary for a production are secured, and that they are in working order when required for use. But this is only the final part of his labours. They begin early in the production, and only culminate with the appearance on the stage of, sometimes, hundreds of small articles that have been culled, with an infinity of trouble, from many places.

His first act is to secure a list of what is wanted;

in other words, a property list, or prop-plot, as it is usually called. This may be done in a variety of ways, and the one to be used in any particular case will depend on the nature of the production in hand. If the play is published, with a printed list of the properties required bound in the book, he is lucky. He is well advised to check it in any case, partly to see that nothing has been omitted, and partly to see that nothing has been unnecessarily included merely to fill up vacant space. But if a list is not supplied, one will have to be made. Sometimes the producer knows the play very well and can draw up a list from memory, or he may have a permanent one, which he is prepared to lend to the property master of any society for whom he is producing the particular play. If neither of these convenient situations arises, or if the play is original, it will be necessary to compile a list.

The proper person to do this depends on who is to arrange the settings. If the producer is responsible for the entire production, he can work out the property plot with the property master, but if the settings are to be arranged by a designer under the direction or with the approval of the producer, the property master will be obliged to work with both of them.

Having made a list of the articles, the next thing is to estimate the cost of acquiring them and to communicate it to the business manager or other responsible official. It will be understood that the order in which these operations takes place is capable of a good deal of variation. For instance, the whole of the estimating for the entire production may have been done when the play was chosen. In this case, the property master will have been allotted a sum, and he must keep within it. The point is that provision must be made in the estimates, whenever they are done and whoever does them, for the properties, so that the property master will be assured that any expenses he may incur will be refunded, even if at first he disburses the money from his

own pocket, or, conversely, that he will be prevented from involving the society in unnecessary expense if he has a tendency in that direction.

The word properties in this connexion means not only the furniture, but also any of the other three classes of articles that will be left for the property master to secure. A certain number of these will require to be bought, as probably no one will have them to lend, and it may be impossible to hire them, but nothing is to be gained by amassing a large number of properties of any kind, as they are rarely of service a second time, and provision has to be made for their storage and repair.

#### FURNITURE

This is usually the largest and most expensive part of the property plot, so it may be convenient to consider it first.

It is definitely undesirable to buy furniture, even if the society can afford it. This is especially true in cases where there is stock scenery that must be used, with variations, over and over again. Different furniture, together with suitable curtains, cushions, etc., particularly if they are of marked design, can do more to change the appearance of a set than anything else, and the society that is saddled with a quantity of furniture which it is obliged to use time after time runs a risk of boring its audience at the sight of the stage before the company have been given a chance to open their mouths.

There are several ways in which furniture may be acquired, other than by buying it. One is to hire it from one of the firms that make hiring furniture to theatrical companies their business; and, although one hesitates to give a guess as to the cost of hiring furniture for a production without knowing the name of it, it may be mentioned that a £5 bill would be light, while £15 would be heavy. These figures only apply when the theatre is near enough to the contractor's warehouse to enable him to deliver the goods in his own vans in the ordinary course of business. When they have to be sent by rail the cost will rise proportionately. For this reason societies are recommended to secure their furniture from a nearby store whenever it is practicable to do so.

For ordinary modern scenes, a furniture shop

can sometimes be persuaded to lend the necessary material in exchange for a free advertisement in the programme, but they are not as a rule eager to do so, as the haste with which furniture has, perforce, to be handled in the course of scene-changing tends to damage it, and to render it subsequently unsaleable.

For this reason it is hardly fair to ask members of a society to lend their own furniture. On a stage, furniture is bound to suffer a degree of ill-treatment that is beyond ordinary wear and tear. Apart from the speed with which it has to be carried on and off, there is the risk of its being injured during the actual performance by dancers, etc. Again, the stage hands in a professional theatre are not accustomed to handling furniture in a way that will leave it suitable to take its place in the living rooms of an ordinary house. That to which they are accustomed has only to *look* suitable for the show; they have no interest in its before- or after-life. This is not to say that stage hands are necessarily clumsy: they are not, but their purpose is different.

The furniture hired from a theatrical furniture warehouse is suitably built, as a rule, to look effective without being too fragile, and provision is made in the price charged for its use to cover the cost of the rapid deterioration.

Wherever it is secured, the furniture is chosen by the producer or other person responsible for arranging the settings, and comes into the care of the property master either at the dress rehearsal or earlier, and he is responsible for it until it (all of it) is returned to the owners.

#### SMALL PROPERTIES

This section is the most interesting from the point of view of the property master, and in connexion with it he has a chance to show his ingenuity and powers of persuasion.

Furniture is so large that it is not an exciting subject. It is usually hired, and this merely means paying a visit to a warehouse and selecting it. But the small properties cover such a wide range of objects and are required for such a diversity of uses that an enthusiastic property master can provide himself with a good deal of entertainment in gathering them together. Some he will buy as cheaply as possible; others he will be able to



borrow for nothing; the rest he may be able to make—in fact, some he will probably have to make, or to get made for him, as certain properties will only look correct on the stage if they are specially made. An example of this occurs in *Ten Minute Alibi* (although this is not a musical play), where the clock must be so constructed that it can be operated from inside, or it will not synchronize with the dialogue.

It will be readily understood that a keen property man who is deft with his hands can save his society a great deal of expense and uncertainty.

#### PERSONAL PROPERTIES

The property master should discuss with each member of the company the properties that each will bear on the stage, and arrange as to their provision, so that there will be no disaster as a result of each having left any matter to the other.

Sometimes a difficulty will arise when an actor or actress is called upon to provide a hand property, which, although sounding personal enough on the property plot, turns out to be an article that nobody in the ordinary way could be expected to possess or to be able to borrow. The property master (he is usually referred to as "Props") should go carefully through all hand props, as they are called, and make a note of all such things so that they may be provided for in the estimates, or he may find, when he is already as near the limit of his expenditure as he dare be, that he is suddenly faced with having to produce, and pay for, say, an enormous feather fan, the only reference to which in the book may be "Enter So-and-So with fan."

The responsibility in a case like this is shared by the actor. Everybody on accepting a part should immediately examine it from the point of view of hand props, and notify the property master of any articles concerning which there may be difficulty. The actor who can, when the question of providing an awkward property occurs, state confidently that he will arrange about it, is not only a friend to the property master, but also a most valuable unseen worker for the good of his society, always provided that he carries out his promise; if he does not, he is one of the greatest nuisances with which the Amateur Movement has to contend.

All actors should, on leaving their dressing rooms to go on the stage, make sure that they have all their personal props with them. The shorter the time between leaving the dressing room and going on the stage, the less risk there is that a property will be put down for a moment during a conversation in the Green Room, and be found to have disappeared when it is required, with subsequent recriminations and excitement.

If it can be done without causing inconvenience, it is worth while to slip on the stage before the curtain goes up and check that any property that one has to use during the action of the play (practical lantern, etc.) is there and in working order, though this is dangerous advice when a hurried change of scene is taking place, as it is obviously undesirable that the stage should be crowded with actors fussing with their properties. Their presence may, in fact, tend to cause the accident they are trying to avert.

#### HAND PROPS

This section includes all those things, other than personal props, which the actors take on the stage with them, or which they use when they are there. Revolvers, pens and ink, cups and saucers, and so on, are examples.

The chief feature about these is that, having been gathered together, they should be in position and ready for use when required; that is to say, tea-pots and wine bottles should be filled and revolvers loaded. With regard to this kind of props, it is most important to see that they conform with the requirements of the text of the play. For example, when an actor has to finish a glass of wine it should not be so full that he is faced with having either to contradict himself or to suffer physical discomfort that may affect his performance during the rest of the evening. Similarly, no player should be called upon to eat or drink anything which is unpalatable to him, or which may affect his digestion. For this reason cups and glasses that actors have to use on the stage should be hygienically safe. Sponge cake is one of the best imitation foods.

A word about revolvers. Always use the kind with solid barrels, if possible. The wad of a blank cartridge from a big pistol at a few yards range will kill, so, if it must be used, it should be issued

by and returned to the property master each night, and he should keep it, and the necessary ammunition, under lock and key. When a revolver is to be fired on the stage, a double should always be kept in the prompt corner in case the one on the stage does not go off.

#### HANDLING THE PROPS

In a professional theatre there will probably be a property man attached to the staff. If so, the society will have to take him on along with the other hands. Then there will be little for the amateur to do. He may go about and see that all is well, and attend to any props that need special attention, but, ordinarily, when there is a professional, it is best not to interfere, as, once the latter knows what he has to do, he rarely makes a mistake; in fact, he is more likely to do so if he is supervised too much.

When the performance is given in a hall or theatre in which there is no regular stage staff, and the work is done by amateurs, the property master will have his hands full. Even in a simple play it is surprising how much there is to do, but in a complicated one it is always better to have sufficient assistants to relieve him of any responsibility for the manual part of the work, so that he may be free to superintend and generally to see that nothing is forgotten or goes wrong.

When a scene is being set the property men (it

may be necessary to have two or three each side, apart from the scene-shifters) should get on as soon as possible so that there may be no delay in ringing up the curtain. All properties, such as letters, tea-trays, etc., which have to be brought on during the action of the play, should be placed ready in the wings. If there is room a small table or bench should be available at each side of the stage with the props laid out on it, and there should be a man in charge of each to hand the props to the actors. When there is not room for anything so elaborate as this, something must be improvised—the top of a skip in the wings makes a good substitute.

Properties should not be left about the stage unattended. When they arrive at the theatre they should all be checked and sorted out and put into order in the property room (it may be only an odd corner under the stage) to which only the property master and his assistants should have admission. Articles will then be taken to the stage or to the wings by the property men and returned by them as soon as possible. Properties handed to actors and retained by them until the fall of the curtain should be collected, or they may go astray.

Finally, the property master must arrive at the theatre sufficiently long before the curtain goes up on each performance to see that there is no panic at the last moment owing to something having disappeared during the night.

## CONCERNING THE SOUBRETTES

By D. GRAHAM DAVIS

Editor of "*The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal*"

AMATEUR Gilbert and Sullivan soubrettes are like the little girl with the curl. When they are good, they are very good. But you remember what the little girl was like when she was bad. As I mentioned in an earlier article, the very name "soubrette" as applied to this group is a misnomer, for the parts do not bear any resemblance to the sprightly, saucy soubrettes found in musical comedy and "period" plays. Perhaps it is that this is not always realized, so giving us the horrid soubrette the Gilbert and Sullivan lover (and the ordinary audience) has to suffer. In the "Dictionary of Stage Terms," given in *THEATRE AND STAGE*, Mr. Edward W. Betts defined the word as meaning a "maid servant or other character, especially with implications of pertness, coquetry, intrigue, etc., in comedy." One can accept this definition implicitly—but not with regard to the Savoy operas. "Pertness": yes, they have that in moderation. "Coquetry": no, for that implies sex, and that is never more than faintly suggested in the characters. "Intrigue": emphatically no. Innocent scheming, as in Pitti-Sing and Melissa, is seen, but never what could be called intrigue, or anything approaching it.

As with the sopranos, it is difficult to attune the mentality and characteristics of the soubrettes to any present-day standards. The only essential difference between the two groups is that the soubrettes are less serious characters and, if only for that reason, more human. In them there is fun and jollity, but in many instances with intense pathos and drama as well. They are more light-hearted than their soprano sisters. They all possess an endearing charm and personality, while their disposition, for the most part, is sunny. In many instances they are the female counterparts of the comedy characters, to whom, often, they act as foils. For this reason what has been written about the "unconscious humour" of the comedy characters would not be out of place for serious consideration by the soubrettes.

The ideal soubrette is young and winsome with an engaging personality. Although one has seen sterling work put into these parts by the more senior members of amateur societies, one has to be so ungallant as to suggest that the soubrette roles, even more than those in the soprano group, should be regarded as the prerogative of the younger folk. Where demanded, high spirits should be present, but without boisterousness, and there must be no coyness. It is in those respects, I feel, that the more mature soubrettes fail to satisfy. Then, again, the general tone of the parts is that of artlessness, rather than sophistication, and there is never archness in the characterization. One could almost subdivide the soubrettes into as many categories as there are parts, for there is little resemblance, other than the most superficial, between them. Iolanthe, Phoebe Meryll, Mad Margaret, and Melissa are the more serious among them, Tessa and Pitti-Sing the lightest. The others fall within these extremes.

CONSTANCE (*The Sorcerer*) is rather colourless compared with the later members of the group. Indeed, the real Savoy soubrette, as immortalized by Miss Jesse Bond, had not arrived when this opera was produced. It is by no means an easy part, yet the effort to make it really convincing is well worth while. Throughout the first act Constance must be played in a restrained, rather lack-lustre, manner as befits a young girl in love with her elderly, though charming, vicar, whom she finds to be entirely unresponsive. Later, when the working of the magic spell has led to her attachment to the decrepit old notary, the part can be broadened out somewhat. But Constance should all the time be shown as a demure, and slightly gawky, country girl. Especially is this required to set off the more elegant grace and charm of Aline. But the difference in disposition and station of the two girls must not be shown in any way by the speech. The dialect of the villagers, as we see at the opening of the second act, is "Mummerset," while Constance's mother

has not the letter "h" in her alphabet—except where it is not required. Constance herself speaks as good English as the, supposedly, better educated folk.

HEBE (*H.M.S. Pinafore*), having a part that was frittered away to next-to-nothing during the original rehearsals, calls for little more from the

refrain from any attempt to force attention upon herself.

EDITH (*The Pirates of Penzance*) brings this type of part a step nearer to its full development, for the soubrette has now become more of that sprightly (but never exuberant) creature that we shall know better later. Edith should bubble over with restrained high spirits, and, like Mabel, must be possessed of a strong personality. Not only is this necessary in a principal who (like Hebe) is little more than leader of the chorus, but it is required to bring out the fact that, undoubtedly, Edith is the ringleader in the adventures which culminate in the discovery of the pirate lair.

THE LADY ANGELA (*Patience*) is an entirely different type of soubrette in relation to all the others. Indeed, it is only the traditional identification of the part with the player of the soubrette roles that justifies its inclusion in this group. The vivacity associated with the group is essentially lacking in the cold and reserved outward demeanour of the "rapturous maiden." This attitude, but with passionate inward yearning, is preserved until Grosvenor appears. Then all repose is cast to the winds for rapturous abandon. The second act sees a return to the languorous attitude of the earlier period, but without its coldness. At the very end of the opera, when Angela drops the pose of aestheticism (and it must have been suggested as a pose), something of the real soubrette is to be seen. In this part, as with the preceding two, sufficient personality is required to indicate Angela as, at once, a principal and the leader of the band of love-sick maidens; one of them—but, at the same time, standing out above them.

IOLANTHE, the name part of that opera, is again an individual soubrette type. There is something about the part which calls for it to be played by the soubrette rather than by a dramatic mezzo-soprano, or even by a contralto. The lighter timbre of voice required may have something to do with this undoubted fact. It is undeniable that when attempts have been made to have the part played by someone not grounded in the soubrette roles (and obviously it is no character to be entrusted to a novice) they have usually ended in comparative, if not total, failure.

Although a good, and not too deep, singing voice is important, Iolanthe is a part for which an actress is far more needed than a singer, as a



Photo by J. W. Debenham

#### MAD MARGARET'S ENTRANCE

A dramatic incident from the first act of *Ryddigore*. The present-day reading and dressing of this part differ materially from the original.

player than an attractive personality. The part was originally written for one who was far from realizing one's conception of the soubrette, but was later allotted to an "unknown," who was so scared of the dialogue that eventually the part was cut down to one with singing only. That "unknown" was Miss Jessie Bond. Hebe's moods are sunny, vivacious, and sympathetic. Unimportant though the part may appear, it must not be allowed to be subdued by the greater prominence given to the other principals. At the same time, as with all the other soubrettes, the actress must

large range of emotions has to be traversed. From start to finish the part needs to be played on a subdued note, which, however, should not be in a minor key. There are two places where the traditional brightness of the soubrette is seen: in the scene, where Strephon first meets the fairies, and in the second act finale, when the Lord Chancellor's ingenuity has made all well for ever. It may not be the easiest thing for a youthful amateur actress to evince maternal care for a son who, in actual fact, may be many years her senior (I have heard of father and daughter playing the two roles—frequently husband and wife do so). But this characteristic must be shown in the reading of the part, for, coupled with tenderness, it is the outstanding attribute of Iolanthe.

MELISSA (*Princess Ida*) is, perhaps alone of this group, as much of to-day as of the year of the opera's production (1884). She is a charming, merry, unspoiled girl, free from acquired or natural guile—although she knows how to wheedle her strong-minded mother. Of the world outside the walls of Castle Adamant she knows nothing but what she has been told. When, eventually, she sees men for the first time, and is attracted towards Florian, it must be felt that her choice is instinctive and well-founded rather than that she has turned to him as the best looking of the three intruders. And she remains a loyal comrade and ally to the men, helping them as best she can; not as a designing minx, but because such an action would be natural to this vital and lovable girl. She indulges in little subterfuges to help Hilarion and his two companions, but so innocently as to disarm reprobation. Yet, in the hands of some amateurs, Melissa becomes little more than a rampagous, arch, designing, little hoyden, which is certainly what Gilbert never intended.

PITTI-SING (*The Mikado*), too, is often played on the lines that have just been characterized as wrong for Melissa. But in this case there is more justification. Pitti-Sing bubbles over with high spirits and vivacity, and is decidedly not so free from guile as Melissa. At the same time, the high spirits of the part should not be carried to excess, as this will spoil the *ensemble* of the "three little maids," whose other representatives, Yum-Yum and Peep-Bo, are so much more sedate. The vivacity and contrast to these two are largely

provided for in the part, and although nothing of too subdued a nature is required, no really conscious effort is needed to give Pitti-Sing her sparkling attributes. And the display of high spirits does not require incessant movement. Even in professional performances one has been irritated by a Pitti-Sing who has been so full of life that

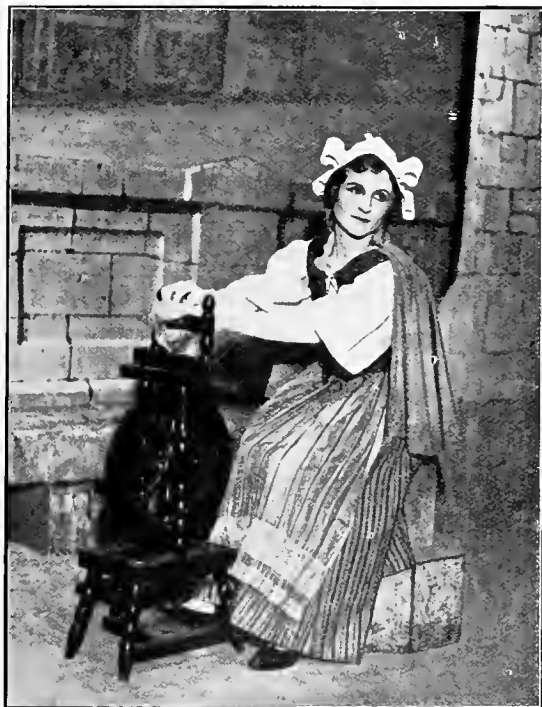


Photo by J. W. Debenham

#### PHOEBE MERYLL IN PENSIVE MOOD

Here, in *The Yeomen of the Guard*, is a part which calls for the display of many emotions, grave and gay. It is by no means an easy part, but is far and away the "plum" of the soubrette group.

she has entirely forgotten the importance of repose. These Pitti-Sings jump about, squirm, and wriggle to such an extent that one itches to tie them to a convenient piece of scenery. One way in which this occurs is the exaggerated Japanese walk indulged in. Why Pitti-Sing should walk in a manner at variance with the other characters and chorus (who, one hopes, have been drilled in the correct manner) is inexplicable; yet many amateurs spoil their portrayal in this way.

MAD MARGARET (*Ruddigore*) ought to be played in the first act somewhat on the lines of

Ophelia (but, of course, without the introspective study necessary for that part). There are some who profess to find this rendering distasteful and alien to the spirit of comic opera. The only argument put forward to support this view is the claim that Gilbert never intended the part to be played in such a manner. These opponents of the modern rendering ask us to believe that the author intended Margaret to be a character on a par with Pitti-Sing—that laughs were meant to be got from the part. But is one to imagine that a modern audience, even at a comic opera, would find anything comic in the spectacle of insanity on the stage? One has no hesitation in recommending the amateur to follow the modern tradition, and to play Margaret as suggested in the opening of this study. It must be remembered that *Ruddigore* was never revived between its original run, in 1887, and 1920, and it had no deeply rooted traditions. But in the fourteen years that have passed since its first revival it has become one of the favourite operas, and can certainly be said to have attained a traditional style, strictly in keeping with the older traditions. At the same time, one cautions the actress against too realistic a portrait, if only for the reason that Ophelias, amateur or professional, are not seen every day. It will be found that there will be plenty of laughs during Margaret's scenes in the first act, but they will not come from the girl's wild, inconsequent, words and similes but from Rose Maybud's bewildered efforts at reply.

In the second act there comes a reversion to the true type. Margaret is still rather mad, but with her demure appearance and timid utterances she becomes a capital foil to the more vivid and robust comedy of Sir Despard.

PHOEBE MERYLL (*The Yeomen of the Guard*) is at once one of the most engaging of Gilbert's female characters and, in the opinion of many who have played her, one of the most difficult. She has to run the whole gamut of varying emotions. She must be played, not as a romping, tomboyish flapper, but as a level-headed, competent, and vivacious girl of great charm and strength of character. The sentimental side of the character should not be stressed. Phoebe appears to be in love with Fairfax, but it is not made clear whether

this is genuine affection or the natural pity any girl would feel for an attractive man in his position. Certainly in the second act there is evidence to lead one to suppose the first alternative, but it is, in many ways, desirable that the part should be played on the lines of the second conjecture. The point of the sentimental story, that Fairfax and Elsie are the lovers, makes it undesirable to introduce the complication of Phoebe. And so, in the scene in which Fairfax is made guardian of his "sister," amid numerous embraces, the impression should be given that Phoebe is not averse to the kisses of this attractive personage, rather than that (at last) she is able to embrace the man she loves.

In the second act Phoebe has one of the "high spots" of any of the operas. Wilfred has discovered the secret of her supposed brother. "It is this accursed Fairfax," says the Jailor in effect. Ideas of vengeance are clearly but slowly forming in his dull brain, but Phoebe shatters them with her quick interruption, "Whom thou hast just shot, and who lies at the bottom of the river!" This incident, slight as it may seem, requires careful timing for its full effect. In the ensuing proposal Phoebe, by tempering her high spirits with a wistful air of resignation, can help the comedy of what, otherwise, might be an almost repulsive scene.

TESSA (*The Gondoliers*) is a more forceful character than her sister, Gianetta. It has to be remembered that both are equal units of what is a well-balanced quartet (the two gondoliers and their wives). Tessa has the more developed personality of the pair, but such predominating influence must be left to the part. The actress must not encourage it, and should studiously avoid any temptation towards overshadowing Gianetta. Tessa, too, is more high spirited, but if the actress gives too much prominence to this, poor Gianetta will fade right out of the picture. Gilbert, in *The Gondoliers*, professed to have made all the parts of equal importance. How far he succeeded in this must be a matter of opinion. The players, by matching themselves to each other, can help the author's intentions. In no case is this truer than in that of Tessa. Too much exuberance is the usual fault.

# THE DANCER AND HER AUDIENCE

By PHILIP J. S. RICHARDSON

Editor, "The Dancing Times"

MR. ARNOLD HASKELL has dealt, almost exclusively, in THEATRE AND STAGE, with what is popularly known as "ballet" dancing. This is the highest form of spectacular dancing, and it is possible that many readers will wonder why so much space should be devoted to such a difficult phase of the Art. The reason is that a high percentage of all spectacular dancing has for its basic technique the same technique as is required of the ballet dancer. This indebtedness to classical dancing is particularly noticeable in modern musical comedy work in which the dances entrusted to the chorus to-day are frequently of the nature of ballet in their conception, and sometimes, as in that popular Alhambra success, *Waltzes from Vienna*, include difficult work *sur les pointes*.

Before we proceed to consider any other form of spectacular dancing, whether it be based on the ballet or not, it will be as well to say a few words about the relationship that exists between the dancer and her audience.

There are many forms of dancing, but for the moment let us divide all dancing into two groups—personal dancing and spectacular dancing. By "personal" dancing I mean all those forms of dancing that we do for *our own* personal gratification. This would include ballroom dancing and all dancing for purposes of physical culture. On the other hand, by "spectacular" dancing I mean all that dancing, generally performed on a stage or other specially prepared space, which is done for the entertainment *of the spectator*. It is spectacular dancing that I intend to discuss.

The term "spectacular dancing" implies three things: the dancer, the audience, and some link between the two. This link consists of the organs of hearing and seeing. All that can come across the footlights from the stage to the audience are waves of sound and waves of light that impinge upon the ears and eyes of the spectator. Everything that a dancer wishes to convey to her audience can be entrusted to these waves by an

artist who knows her business, and can be received by a spectator *who is prepared to do his share of the work*.

Here we come to the first important point that must be appreciated by every dancer who hopes



ATTILIA RADICE

The prima ballerina assoluta at La Scala, Milan,  
in an arabesque

to make a successful appearance before the public. The work does not rest entirely with the dancer—the spectator has to do his part. He must not be content to let these waves of sound and light just reach him . . . he must encourage them to penetrate as deeply into his understanding as they can, and the depth of their penetration depends not only on their nature as sent out by the dancer,



but also to a considerable extent on the artistic susceptibilities of the spectator at the moment of reception. If a dancer's work is worth thinking about, it can only be appreciated to its full extent by an audience that is prepared to think, and as that act of thinking stirs up the higher aesthetic faculties of the spectator he or she is liable to

both upon the same programme, and it would be foolish to present them either in a "review" or in the middle of a variety programme when the mind of the spectator is not attuned to the atmosphere of such ballets. Dance turns that are given at cabaret entertainments in restaurants and are generally seen by people who have already spent



"LES PRÉSAGES"

A scene from Massine's ballet, composed to the music of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, presented by "Les Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo" at the Alhambra

brain fag just as much as the dancer is liable to bodily fatigue.

Great care must be taken, therefore, to see that the programme is not too long, that it is suitable for the type of audience before whom it is to be presented, and that the items are presented in the most advantageous order.

The "symphonic" ballets, *Les Présages* and *Choreartium*, produced by Massine at the Alhambra, require a considerable amount of concentration on the part of the spectator if they are to be appreciated to the fullest extent. It would be inadvisable, therefore, to place them

three hours in a theatre should be so "light" in conception that they demand no over-deep thought on the part of the audience.

Dancing has been defined as the outward expression in co-ordinate rhythmic movement of an inward emotion felt by the dancer. If we accept this broad definition a difficulty under which the spectacular dancer labours is at once apparent. The spectacular dancer has to express emotions that she may not really feel. She may have to be gay when she has no real cause for gaiety; she may have to be sad when she is seeing the whole world in colours of the rose; she may



have to move in the atmosphere of the seventeenth century when she is an extremely up-to-date member of the twentieth. And so there is a danger that her dancing may not be truthful and that she will not be conveying to her audience that sense of truth which is one of the most important attributes of her work. It is, therefore,

done to Hungarian music. Historical inaccuracies should be guarded against, and, conversely, historical accuracy sought for.

It is, therefore, essential that the message sent forth by the dancer to her audience shall convey a sense of truth. It must also convey what I will call a sense of power. By this I mean that the



"LES SYLPHIDES"

Photo by J. W. Debenham

Fokine's famous ballet danced to Chopin's music, as presented by the "Vic-Wells" ballet company

most essential that this defect be remedied. The young dancer must realize from the beginning that the spectacular dance must be imbued with a certain number of the qualities of the personal dance, and she must educate herself to be able to feel, as far as is possible, the emotions that the part demands, for if she does not feel them to *some* extent she cannot expect the spectator to feel them to *any* extent at all.

There are other ways in which this "sense of truth" to which I have referred may be broken. One is by the use of wrong music. There is something untruthful about a Polish National Dance

dancer must give the impression that she could, if she liked, do far more. She must never appear to have touched the limits of her technique. A sense of power can be shown by a young dancer every whit as well as by an experienced ballerina. It is shown by one who has never shirked the drudgery of practice. It simply means that, as far as you have progressed, you are mistress of your technique. . . . be that technique what we call Elementary or Advanced. Let me try to explain more fully what I mean. I have never timed how long a dancer can hold an *arabesque*, but supposing she can do this in the classroom for

three seconds without wobbling, then on the stage she must never hold it for more than two seconds at the longest. If she holds it for the full time the audience knows, as she begins to wobble, that she has reached the limit of her powers; if, however, she deliberately passes from the still firmly held *arabesque* into another pose her full powers



TATIANA RIABOUCHINSKA

As "The Dancer" in the Fokine ballet "Petrouchka"  
during the Russian season at the Alhambra

are not revealed, and she conveys the impression that she is a complete mistress of poise. This is what I call a sense of power, and it applies to many things besides *arabesques*. If in the classroom you can just do an *entrechat six*, then attempt to do no more than a perfect *four* in public. You have no idea how many dancers ruin the effect of their dancing by attempting things that are on the extreme confines of their powers.

I have explained to you how your dance, if it

is to appeal to your audience, must convey what I have called a sense of power and a sense of truth. It must also convey a sense of design—that surely is a fact so obvious that it scarcely needs enlarging upon, for a dance with no design is not worthy of the name of dance at all. I was originally going to write a sense of beauty, but I think the word "design" is better, for the eccentric and the humorous dance may appeal and yet have no "beauty" as we commonly understand that word.

Further, in countless instances, when the dance tells a definite tale or interprets a definite idea, when it is a "story dance," it must also convey a sense of meaning. Such instances are to be found in ballets like *Petrouchka*, *Coppelia*, or *Pomona*, and in practically every character and demi-character number that occurs to you.

In all cases, then, whether your dance is a dance of meaning, a story dance, or not, it is essential that in its execution you should convey to your audience this sense of power, truth, and design to which I have referred—but if your dance has no meaning—if it is just pure dancing such as we see in *Les Sylphides*—if it depends upon its sense of design for its existence, then to convey a sense of power and of truth is even more necessary in order that the absence of meaning may be atoned for. These types of dances require that the performer should be a complete mistress of the technique that she uses. They require at least a budding artist to execute them and a real artist to arrange them. They are like copperplate writing; if there is the least flaw in a curve they are marred. They are so difficult because unless they are absolutely perfect, the sense of power and of design is lost, and as they have no meaning in the ordinary acceptance of the word, they have, therefore, by the time they reach their audience, no message to carry at all. Therefore, whenever you present a dance of this nature, let it be so simple that it is well within the powers of the performer. Remember what I said about the sense of power—it is the margin between what you do and what you could do. We see many solos that convey no sense of power at all because they are crammed full of difficult steps that absorb every atom of the performer's ability, and leave her floundering in an endeavour to stretch that ability more than is possible.

## THE ART OF ACTING

By CONSUELO M. DE REYES

*Producer, Little Theatre, Citizen House, Bath, and Everyman Theatre, Hampstead; Lecturer in Drama, University College, Exeter*

A RECURRING dramatic controversy is concerned with the need for the actor himself to experience the emotions of the characters that he represents. Many famous actors have been known to enter so completely into their parts that they have left the stage on the point of prostration. On the other hand, many actors believe that the actor should always govern his feelings by technique, and thus be able in the most passionate moment of the performance to remark in an undertone to another player that the bald-headed old gentleman in the stalls has fallen asleep.

Two schools of thought have arisen to maintain these opposing theories. According to one theory, an actor's power depends on the degree to which he identifies himself with the part he plays, allowing himself to be swept away by a flood of genuine feeling. The alternative theory regards personal emotion as a dangerous factor. An actor, it is contended, must, throughout, remain cool and calculating while he presents an outer semblance of emotion only. As often happens, the correct answer would seem to lie in the middle course between these two opposites. An actor who loses himself wholly in his part is bound to act badly, for he has lost control of his own personality. We do not go to the theatre to see a mere production of actuality, but we do go to see a heightened vision of life. We demand an expression of experience, plus the actor's personality, and it is at this point that we require that the actor's expression should be controlled and his medium subdued to his purpose. An actor's medium is his body, and especially his voice. This is the instrument on which he must play, but he must master his instrument, and not be mastered by it. All art necessitates technique, and technique implies control. Therefore there must be both something to express and a definite method of expressing it.

The primary essential of any actor is that he should be a humanitarian. He should know and love humanity, and be able to laugh and sorrow

with it, since only in this way will he be capable of rendering himself its representative. He must be gifted, superabundantly, with imagination, and be possessed of a quick, warm temperament. In addition, a sense of humour will be one of his prime requisites.

Another essential requirement is a good and flexible voice. We live to-day in an Age of the Voice, when the gramophone and wireless alike impress upon us the manifold possibilities of this great instrument. If a voice has any serious defect, all thoughts of acting should be abandoned, although hard work may remedy slight defects. An important factor in the proper development of the voice is an ear for music. The natural speaking voice is richly musical, and it is as necessary on the stage to speak at concert pitch as it is to sing at concert pitch. An actor should be able to catch tones of voice from others and to give a wide variety of tones himself.

The secret of an actor's success is hard work properly directed. No actor can succeed either by mere luck or by any innate strain of genius. The famous professional actor is greater than the ambitious amateur only by virtue of longer experience and harder work. Amateurs are far too often apt to forget the length of time that the mastery of stage technique requires. The famous Eleonora Duse used to say that it took her a year to acquire correctly a single gesture. The person who succeeds on the stage is the one who sets himself to master the technical phases of his craft and guides his course unswervingly by the principles that his study proves to be sound. The quality of the performance that an actor will ultimately give depends to a great extent upon the method used to get into the part at the beginning. An actor should analyse the character of the man he plays until he understands it absolutely. It is a common mistake to learn the words of the character before realizing why the character speaks these words, and why he would not speak

any others. Far too often players make the mistake of learning the words, judging them on their face value, adding their own personal idealization, and then uttering them for the sake of their own telling qualities rather than as a means of revealing the character that is supposed to speak them. Later, when the inevitable inconsistencies between the portrayal of the actual and the imaginary character appear, it is too late to reconcile them. After the actual character that the actor is called upon to portray has been studied, he must get back again into the atmosphere of the play, and associate this new self with the other characters, the time, and the place imagined by the dramatist. The dramatist has carefully selected the words; they are those that will unfold the plot with the greatest economy. It is the work of the dramatist to compress into a few lines what, in life, may take many hours to say; hence the dramatist's work, like that of the actor, is primarily one of selection. Indeed, the dramatist proceeds along the line of his own work exactly like the actor. He thinks of his character first, and long before he conceives speeches for him. Then, he writes in rough form words for his new creation. Later, he polishes the words and sentences and presents them in the form of the finished play. Just as the author, consciously or unconsciously, stumbles first of all upon the crude elements of his created characters, so the actor must deliberately go in search of them, and re-assemble them after his own fashion, if his work is to be marked with confidence and grounded in truth, as all truly artistic work should be.

#### HANDS AND EYES

Two of the most powerful instruments of the actor's portrayal are his hands and eyes. Just as the musician does not think of applying his art until he has spent many years practising finger exercises, scales, and simple compositions, so the mechanical, technical groundwork of acting must be learnt by the actor. The actor must be able to let the audience see that he is thinking thoughts and having emotions that are not expressed in words, also in many cases he will desire to convey to the audience emotions of which the other characters of the play are supposed to be unaware. It is with the eyes that such emotions frequently

have to be portrayed. A famous example of a superb piece of eyework was given by Irving when he played Becket. The King had just offered him the Archbishopric of York. Irving as Becket listened in respectful silence; then for a moment his eyes darted away from the King and then back to him. In that glance was compressed all the ominous foreboding, the vague terror, of the future. It was infinitely more powerful than words, and it was done just with a look of his eyes—merely an instant's flash. Irving's eyes were small and actually, therefore, they were not good eyes for the stage, but he was able to use them with supreme skill.

#### THE RULE FOR EYEWOR

There is one rule for eyework and it is of universal application. When an actor wants the audience to notice his eyes, he should give his spectators nothing else to look at. He should not, for instance, move his eyes and his head at the same time. If an actor is to bestow a look of bitterness on a man he is not facing, he may feel inclined to turn to face him; but this movement may convey nothing, for in all probability the audience will miss the accompanying look of hatred. In any situation of this kind the actor should dart his black look just before he moves his head. There should be just a sufficient flash to photograph the look on the minds of the audience. The time allowed for this may be infinitesimal, but its effect will be sure. Again, care must be taken to see that the eyework is visible to the audience. Too often the effect worked out at rehearsals is estimated from the point of view of other actors on the stage only, and care must be taken to see that each shade of feeling is registered unmistakably on the people in the auditorium.

All eyework must, of course, be practised with the greatest economy, and must not include any element of over-emphasis or of rolling the eyes. The actor must find out just how little is required to register the effect. Anything more than just enough is likely to be a great deal too much. It is a basic principle that actors should save all their powers for the big moments of the dramatic climax, and not dissipate them on small effects.

In striving for any effect or impression, the actor should always endeavour to conceal the

means by which he gains it. If an actor's gestures are not perfectly natural to the actor himself, they are likely to seem awkward to him, and if they are awkward for him, they will be noticed as such by the audience, who will become conscious of the gesture itself rather than of the impression the actor wishes to create by it.

towards a complete naturalness, and it is from real life and real emotions, not from tradition, that an actor must learn his gestures to-day.

One of the finest examples of the quiet, restrained method of modern acting was given by Miss Horniman's Company in a performance of *Hindle Wakes* in Manchester. The son of the



SCENE FROM "THE AGE OF PLenty"

Photo by J. W. Debenham

As produced at the Embassy Theatre. Note the use of raised stage and dramatic use of double action

Frequently young actors think that unless they are able to do something with their hands, they will be suspected of being amateurs, but the most difficult thing in all the actor's art is the faculty of doing nothing at the right time. An excellent general rule is to do nothing when in doubt; never make a gesture until the action compels you to make it. In olden days, when Kemble and Kean were the giants of the stage, every emotion had a set of gestures by which it was expressed. A certain position of the hands indicated pity, another horror, another supplication, and so on, but since then we have advanced far

household had returned when everyone else in the family had been in bed for several hours. His father, armed with a candle in one hand and a poker in the other, came downstairs expecting a burglar. When the old man found his son there he started to reason with him in a low voice in order not to disturb the others who were asleep. His speech was some forty lines long, and throughout the delivery of it he stood perfectly still without making a single gesture. An extraordinary sense of earnestness was thus imparted, and the scene gained in significance.

All gestures should grow from the character of

the person represented rather than from the lines spoken. Thus, if an actor assimilates the character, the gestures will follow inevitably.

In Shakespearean parts and in many plays of the heroic, costume type, the human beings are human in a magnified form. Their emotions are thrown into high relief and exaggerated. With them, we must also project our emotions on a larger scale. The gesture, corresponding to the emotions expressed, must be freer and, in a sense, more formal. Nowadays the modern stage aims at suggesting. The actor does just enough to register the emotion, and then stops at that point, but in olden days that would not have been considered sufficient—the tempests of emotion that took place in the soul of the character had to be visualized. In plays of the heroic type, the gestures are usually full, and are given from the shoulder; in plays of the more restrained, modern type, gestures are usually smaller, and proceed from the elbow. Thought should always precede gestures, which should thus grow from inside.

In any consideration of acting, it must be remembered that the effect which a play makes on an audience is composite. One actor cannot stand alone; he cannot get along satisfactorily without the others, and the others cannot get along without him. Half of the actor's work is to make effective his own speeches, and the other half is to make effective the speeches of his associates. No scene can make its effect through the efforts of one actor; it must be made through the concerted effort of all the actors in the scene. These various efforts must be blended one into another. Every member of an audience has witnessed a scene being built up steadily and powerfully, and then seen it shattered by the mere voice of a minor character who was out of the mood of the whole.

Every play is bound to have a certain amount of explanation woven into it in order to make the story clear, and this routine explanation may be somewhat dull. During it the actor must make an extra effort to hold the attention of the audience, for if he does not, then he will find that he has lost his hold on the audience when the

more interesting moments occur. The searching test of an actor lies in his ability to keep the audience alert and interested throughout such dull patches. Big scenes, if they are genuine, will almost make themselves, and are invariably the easiest.

The power of listening to the speech of another, in such a way that the audience is persuaded to listen also, is one of the most direct methods of imprinting the facts that govern the story of a play upon the minds of an audience. An outstanding example of this is found in the production of any play by Bernard Shaw. The opening scene of *Major Barbara* is typical of his method. In this scene, Lady Britomart and her son, Stephen, sit on a settee in the centre of the stage, and for fifteen minutes the actor playing Stephen must listen to a detailed summary of the situation in the Undershaft family, past, present, and future. Throughout the long scene, Stephen has only a few perfunctory speeches, but a good actor playing this part is able to make more vital each remark of Lady Britomart's.

The method by which an actor listens will depend entirely upon his own individuality, and it is impossible to lay down any hard and fast rules for him. Sometimes the end may be achieved by keeping the eyes fixed firmly upon the speaker, or he may convey to the audience by his expression of horror or pity the depths of suffering through which another is passing. Frequently a line may get a laugh, not because it is given in a clever way by the actor who speaks it, but because of the way it is received by the listener. In a tense scene the slightest movement of the hand or head, even on the part of a minor actor, is apt to take on a profound significance. Throughout a play, however many times it may have been given, the actor should always endeavour to think that he is hearing the words for the first time, and give the impression that his answer is the spontaneous response to what he has heard. Only in this manner can the recreative joy of drama be recaptured afresh for each member of an audience, and in his ability to revitalize his audience will be found the measure of the actor's art.

# ENTERTAINMENT TAX

By DUDLEY S. PAGE

*Author of "The Law of the Amateur Stage"*

WHEN Entertainment Tax was first introduced into this country, in 1916, certain provisos were included in the Act, and in various amendments since that year, for the benefit of charitable entertainments and entertainments provided for partly educational purposes that are not conducted for profit.

I will deal first with purely charitable entertainments, which are governed by Sect. 6 (4) of the Finance Act 1924, and which may be divided into:

- (1) Entertainments promoted by Societies of a permanent character, and
- (2) Entertainments of a casual or isolated character.

Of the two, the former class is the more important, in that it applies to entertainments organized by permanent Operatic and Dramatic Societies giving their productions periodically, one, two, or more each year, and working under a properly organized constitution.

In all such cases applications for exemption are regulated by a system of percentages, that is, the percentage that the profits bear to the expenses. These percentages vary from the amount of the tax in the case of the first production to a maximum of 25 per cent in the case of later productions, but the maximum is not wholly reached until after the seventh entertainment.

Claims by Societies for exemption from Entertainments Duty under this Section of the Act are ordinarily decided in accordance with certain rules that have been drawn up by the Commissioners. These rules form no part of the Act itself, but have been framed by the Commissioners for the purpose of ensuring uniformity in dealing with such claims, and for providing certain forms of application applicable to varying cases. The rules themselves are embodied in the Commissioners Leaflet No. 16, which is as follows:

- I. If such a Society has not already held any

entertainments, whether for charity or otherwise, its FIRST entertainment will be provisionally exempted from duty if a guarantee is given that the donation to charity will be not less than the amount of the duty remitted.

2. Its SECOND entertainment will be provisionally exempted if a guarantee is given that the donations to charity as a result of the two entertainments will be not less than the amount of the duty remitted on the first, plus 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the second.

3. The THIRD entertainment will be provisionally exempted if a guarantee is given that the donations to charity as a result of the three entertainments will be not less than the amount of the duty remitted on the first, plus 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the second, plus 25 per cent of the gross receipts from the third.

4. The FOURTH entertainment will be exempted if the donations to charity as a result of the three previous entertainments have been not less than the amount of the duty chargeable in respect of the first entertainment, plus 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the second, plus 25 per cent of the gross receipts from the third.

5. The FIFTH entertainment will be exempted if either—

(a) the aggregate donations to charity from the three previous entertainments have been not less than 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the second, plus 25 per cent of the gross receipts from the third and fourth; or

(b) the aggregate donations to charity from the four previous entertainments have been not less than the amount of duty chargeable in respect of the first entertainment, plus 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the second, plus 25 per cent of gross receipts from the third and fourth.



6. The SIXTH entertainment will be exempted if either—

(a) the aggregate donations to charity from the three previous entertainments have been not less than 25 per cent of the aggregate gross receipts; or

(b) the aggregate donations to charity from the four previous entertainments have been not less than 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the second entertainment, plus 25 per cent of the gross receipts from the third, fourth, and fifth; or

(c) the aggregate donations to charity from the five previous entertainments have been not less than the amount of the duty chargeable in respect of the first entertainment, plus 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the second, plus 25 per cent of the gross receipts from the third, fourth, and fifth.

7. The SEVENTH entertainment will be exempted if either—

(a) the aggregate donations to charity from the three or four previous entertainments have been not less than 25 per cent of the aggregate gross receipts; or

(b) the aggregate donations to charity from the five previous entertainments have been not less than 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the second entertainment, plus 25 per cent of the gross receipts from the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth.

8. SUBSEQUENT entertainments will be exempted if the aggregate donations to charity from the previous three or four or five entertainments have been not less than 25 per cent of the aggregate gross receipts.

If the Society which makes the claim has already held one or more entertainments, for charity or otherwise, it will be treated under the above rules as far as applicable but any Society which is unable to obtain exemption under the foregoing rules for a forthcoming entertainment may be granted provisional exemption if a guarantee is given that the resulting donation to charity will be not less than 25 per cent of the gross receipts.

If the guarantees required by Rules 1, 2, and 3, are not forthcoming, duty must be paid, but the Commissioners will be prepared to consider applications for repayment of the duty when it can be shown that such repayment will enable the Society to fulfil the conditions in respect of which a guarantee was required; provided that at least 14 days before the entertainment, either application for exemption has been made or notice of intention to claim repayment under this rule has been given.

The condition that the whole of the net proceeds must be devoted to charitable or philanthropic purposes will be interpreted as allowing the three following items to be charged against the gross receipts—

(a) a reasonable amount carried forward as a working balance to meet the preliminary expenses of the next performance, provided that the Society has passed a rule, that, if it is dissolved, any balance in hand shall be given to charity.

(b) the annual subscription to a Central Association to which the Society concerned is affiliated;

(c) refreshments to the performers at a cost not exceeding 1s. a head per performance.

It will be noted that under Rules 1, 2, and 3, the exemption is not only *provisional*, but also subject to a guarantee. Rule No. 4 omits both these conditions, so that if your first three entertainments have attained the percentages required, your fourth and subsequent shows would be exempted, *ipso facto*, and without guarantee. But directly you fail to reach the percentage required, your exemption would again become provisional and subject to guarantee.

Applications for exemption in cases arising under the above rules should usually be made to The Secretary, H.M. Customs & Excise, Custom House, London, E.C.3, and must be made at least fourteen days before the date of the entertainment. Failure to observe this time limit will invalidate any application.

The appropriate forms for all such applications may be obtained from the Secretary's office, as aforesaid, or from any Customs and Excise office.







MR. HARCOURT WILLIAMS

*Photo by Hugh Marr*

# PRODUCING SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS—I

By HARCOURT WILLIAMS

WHAT is it that first draws us to Shakespeare—when we are very young, I mean?

I can think of a variety of reasons that send us scuttling away from him. In my own case, I fancy the attraction began when my mother gave me an old copy of the plays which happened to be in the family library. How deep her intention was I cannot say. She knew that from the age of six years I had been obsessed by the theatre because I had given excerpts from Sarah Thorne's touring pantomime with the kitchen table as an extemporized stage—my first introduction to the simple effectiveness of the Elizabethan "platform"! This volume of Shakespeare had been printed in 1827 and the type was small, even for youth's sharp eyes, but it had a musty smell, which I found intriguing. I recall repeated attempts to read the first play in the book, but they never got beyond the first scene. Prospero's life story defeated me. But my desire to know more did not flag. To my great delight, when I was twelve years old, my father took seats for us all to see the Lyceum production of *Henry VII*, the opulent pageantry of which had just caused a great sensation. On the very day of our proposed visit the young Duke of Clarence died, and all the theatres were closed by order of the Lord Chamberlain. My elder brothers, who doubtless by this time had had their interest in history killed at school, vetoed the Tudor period, and the tickets, instead of being exchanged for another night at the Lyceum, were taken for another theatre. My disappointment was such that it is no great wonder that I have forgotten whatever frivolous play we witnessed in the end. As a sop my mother took me during the following year to see Henry Irving and Ellen Terry in Tennyson's *Becket*, a circumstance that shaped the future course of my life. It was not until later that I saw the Lyceum Shakespearean revivals, and my first introduction to the plays on the stage was a performance of *Hamlet* at the Crystal Palace Theatre when Mrs. Bandmann-Palmer essayed the title role. I was impressed, but resentful. I knew that something

was fundamentally wrong, and, oh dear, that feminine hat overflowing with a sheaf of black cock feathers! The point I wish to make is this: there must have been some romantic quality native to the plays, which, in spite of a slow brain, reading difficulties, and indifferent presentation, seized hold of my imagination; and should not the joy that comes to the young in this way be exploited by professors and teachers, rather than emphasis laid on the dreary penance of "notes and anachronisms" that are made so much more important than the text?

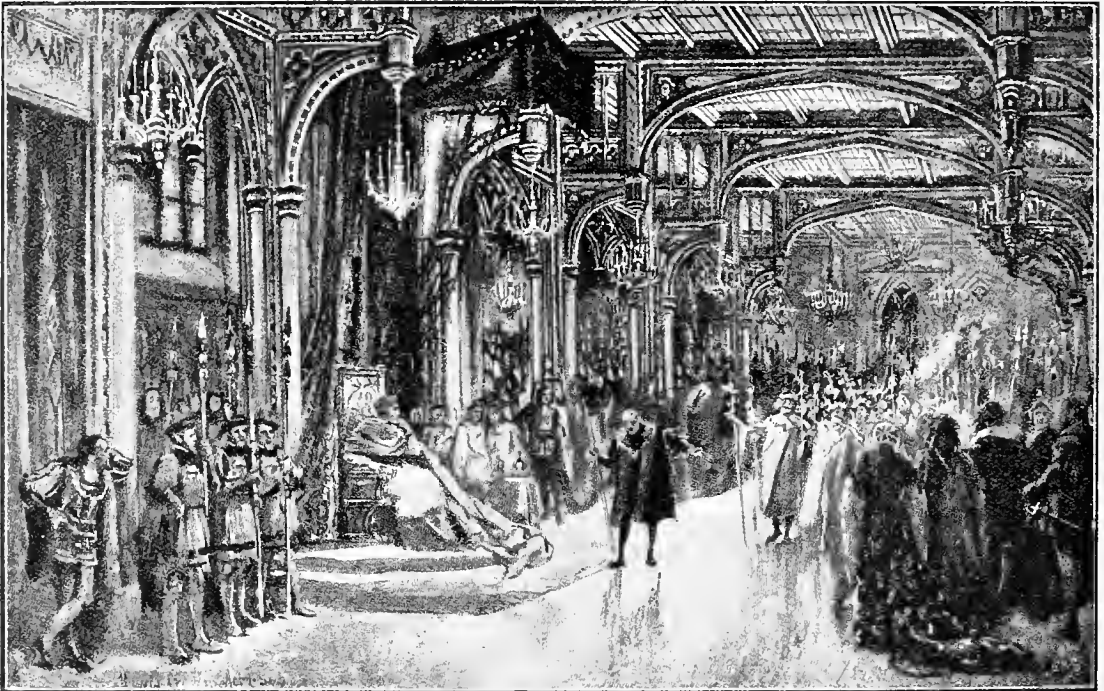
It took me many years of experience and work to realize that Shakespeare's plays had not always been acted on an artificially lighted "picture" stage to an audience plunged in darkness. The effect of Greek tragedy played in a theatre open to the sky and with a background of mountain and distant seascape must have been exhilarating, and no doubt performances at the Globe Theatre by daylight and on a platform stage, which showed the actors "in the round" and brought them into an intimate relation with the audience, must have possessed a quality that is lost forever.

In 1599 the Globe Theatre was built on the Bankside, London. The year is significant because, as Sir Walter Raleigh points out, "The date of its building coincides with the beginning of Shakespeare's greatest dramatic period, when he set himself to teach English tragedy a higher flight. His tragedies and Roman plays, it is safe to assume, were brought out at this theatre under his own supervision; the actors probably instructed by himself; the very building was possibly designed for his requirements." When we feel inspired to teach Shakespeare his own job, it is well to bear the foregoing words in mind!

The structure of the Globe, Malone tells us, was hexagonal on the outside, but perhaps circular within. It was built of oak beams and plaster on a stone foundation. The oak frame work that exists in many Elizabethan houses to-day is as hard as steel, and had it not been for the disastrous fire that destroyed the theatre during a performance

of *Henry VIII*, there is no reason, from an architectural point of view, why it should not be standing now. The building was about forty feet high with roofed galleries for the audience running round it. They were surmounted by a turret, from which a flag flew when a performance was in progress. The stage itself was a bare platform

in front while properties were being cleared or set behind. It is thought that the Inner Stage was also used for a tiring room, but, although this may have been so in early days, it would be an inconvenient arrangement, and it is probable that the tiring room at the new Globe was farther from the stage. Finally, two doors at the back,



KING HENRY VIII, ACT I, SCENE 5

jutting out some distance into the pit, where the "groundlings" could obtain standing room, for there were no seats here, for the sum of one penny. The stage itself had a roof supported on pillars, but the space between this and the galleries was open to the sky. At the back of the stage there was a gallery which was used for such practicabilities as Juliet's balcony, or the battlements in the historical dramas. Beneath the gallery was an "Inner Stage," which could be curtained off. This was used for Prospero's cave, for Lear's tent, or Mad Tom's hovel in the same play. There might also have been a "traverse" curtain that would cut out the gallery and the Inner Stage, and thus make a third division in working the stage, permitting scenes to be acted

left and right of the Inner Stage, supplied the entrances for the players.

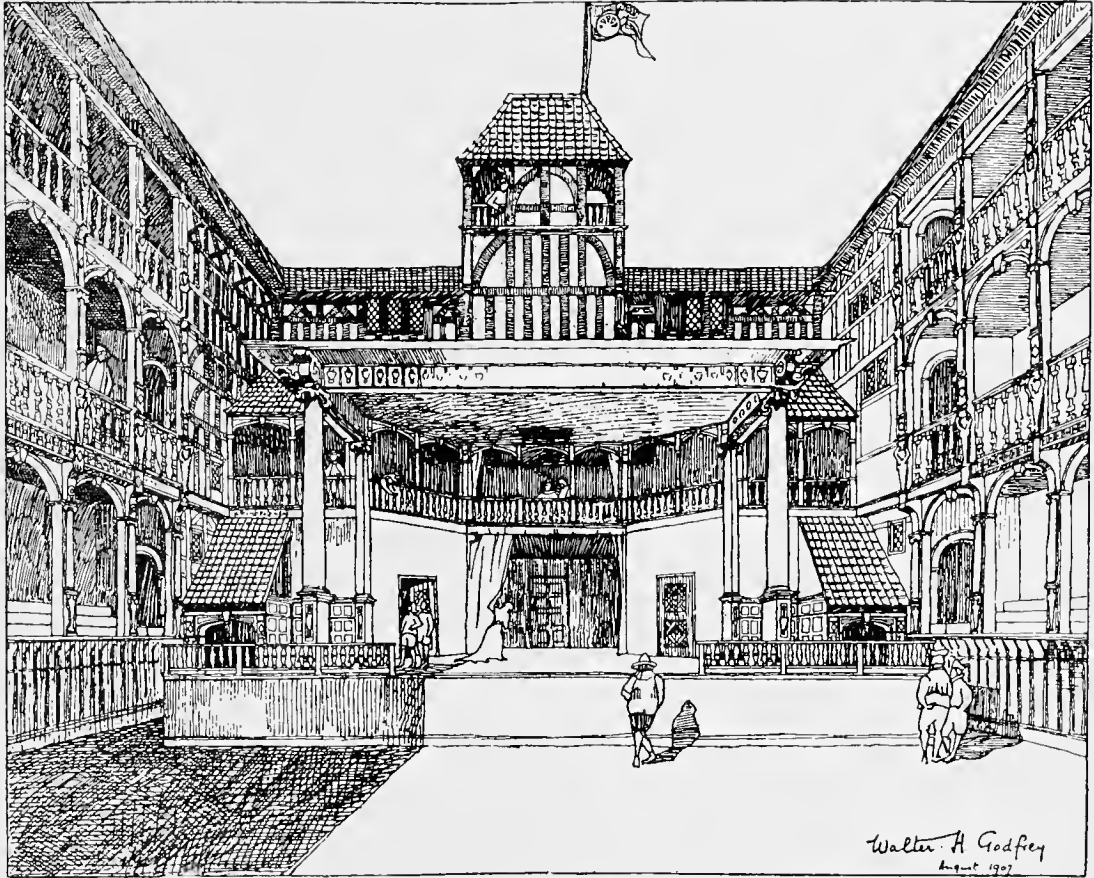
Of the acting John Masefield says, "It is likely that this was much quicker than modern acting. The plays were acted swiftly, without hesitation or dawdling over 'business,' and were played straight through, without waits. There was little or no scenery to most plays. The properties, i.e. chairs, beds, etc., were simple and few. The play was the thing. The aim of the play was to give not a picture of life, but a glorified vision of life. The object was not realism, but illusion."

One other short quotation, again from Walter Raleigh, is relevant: "While the Restoration theatre mangled and parodied the tragic masterpieces, a new generation of readers kept alive the

knowledge and heightened the renown of the written word. The readers of Shakespeare took over from the fickle players the trust and inheritance of his fame."

The fickle players indeed have "done their

neck and make first-rate evidence in the hands of those who plead that good actors are blessed with more emotion than intellect. Irving rescued the plays from this kind of desecration and presented them with great skill and imagination. However,



THE FORTUNE THEATRE, INTERIOR

damnedest" to betray their master, but I am not sure that the readers have not done their share in building a mountain of editions, annotations, and treatises with which they have succeeded in obscuring the sunrise. There is that monstrous library, too, in which they have attempted to lock the plays away from the theatre, forgetting that love laughs at prison bolts.

In the eighteenth century the plays in truncated and adapted forms became the "mode." The travesty that Garrick made of the last scene in *Romeo and Juliet* will hang for ever round his

under the influence of his period, for which he was no more to blame than the public for whom he was catering, he still cut the plays drastically, and altered the continuity of scenes to fit in with the elaborate scenic effects that were then popular. Victorian prudery demanded further abbreviations, which often robbed the plot of its poignancy. Unfortunately, Irving's imitators went one worse instead of one better, and the productions, lacking Irving's and Ellen Terry's vivid personalities, became cumbersome structures, which bored the public and drove so many from the performance.

of Shakespeare's plays that we still experience great difficulty in luring them back.

Meanwhile, about fifty years ago, an influence began to make itself felt—in a very small way at first—which eventually revolutionized the Shakespearean theatre almost as completely as the Puritan influence shook the Church. William Poel went back to the fountain head and presented the plays in the same manner as they were acted at the Globe Theatre in Shakespeare's day, that is, as near as he could humanly get to the original. Many caught fire from this flame, notably Harley Granville Barker, and now it is rather the exception than otherwise to see a production of Shakespeare that is not consciously, or unconsciously, based on Poel's work. No self-respecting producer can slice a play about to fit it in with his "production," and owing to the altered point of view in the public mind, the frankness of Shakespeare, even when it amounts to bawdiness, is no longer an excuse for cutting.

I do not wish to imply that we have found the ideal way of presenting his plays—far from it—but our experiments are at least marking time rather than going backwards. There is, perhaps,

too strong a feeling that we must do something outrageous to make Shakespeare interesting. That line of thought will lead to disaster. But fresh points of view (Shakespeare, like a diamond, can give light from many facets), fresh ideas for presentation, and a throwing overboard of traditional clutter, make for a wholesome atmosphere, provided always that we do not offend against the dramatic values set down by the author.

The more I have had to deal with Shakespeare the more difficult I have found him, but always the more enthralling. The initial task is to get some kind of clarity into one's vision, and then to convey that vision to other people, who will persist in demanding the most extraordinary qualities from Shakespeare, all spelt in capital letters. Every honest man knows that such precepts can no more be upheld in capitals than can the moral virtues, and Shakespeare would be the last to desire that he should be so belied.

O, Let my books be then the eloquence  
And dumb presagers of my speaking breast;  
Who plead for love, and look for recompense,  
More than the tongue that more hath more express'd.  
O, Learn to read what silent love hath writ;  
To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.

*Harcourt Williams*

# THE AUTHENTIC DRAMA OF THE THEATRE

By T. G. WILLIAMS, M.A., F.R.Hist.S.

ANY amateur dramatic society assembled to discuss the choice of its next play is faced with difficulties of two principal kinds. In the first place there are the obvious limitations set on its choice by the extent of its membership, the proportion of men and women, their range of ages, their experience of acting, their general education, the material resources of the society, the available stage accommodation and equipment, the variety of social accomplishments among the acting members, their knowledge of the theatre acquired as playgoers, the relation of the society to the community from which the members are drawn, the frequency of its productions, the character and intelligence of the probable and possible audiences, the ability of the producer: all these circumstances will be present in the minds of those who have been entrusted with the task of selecting the play. Between the extreme limits of the unrehearsed acted charades of a Christmas-party and the full-dress performances of a first-class amateur repertory company, with its developed resources and established audience, there are hundreds of intermediate agencies of play production with every possible variety of skill and equipment. In the second place, the choice of play will be governed by a consideration of the ends in view. Plays may be rehearsed and produced for a variety of possible motives. A group of village youths and maidens will join under the leadership of the local schoolmaster to present a "sketch" in the Church Hall, the proceeds to be devoted to the Cottage Hospital. With a parallel motive a number of Mayfair débutantes and their entourage of eligible young men will present, at a *matinée* in a fashionable London theatre, some pageantry giving opportunity for the display of youth, beauty, and gallantry. Westminster School has continued since its foundation its long tradition of acted Latin plays, which are a contribution to the study of Latinity and a part of the classical curriculum, while in the University Dramatic Societies the

motive is pre-eminently cultural, the exercise of an art that may add a grace to life and give opportunity for the expansion of personality and the deepening of emotional sensibility.

We shall probably agree that some of the ends that play-acting societies have in view are spurious. In particular, the society which exists primarily for the production of the propagandist play in which dramatic values are secondary cannot be said to be using drama for a legitimate purpose. Nor is it any more legitimate to use the stage for mere spectacle, or for the exploiting of pretty figures, faces, and fashions. These things are foreign to the artistic purpose of drama.

In general, however, the popularity of amateur acting is based on sound principles and answers to certain permanent characteristics of our human nature: our love of make-believe, our delight in a well-told story, the pleasure we find in watching colourful motion, our interest in the interplay of thoughts, passions, and fancies that are as threads drawn out of our own experience of life and woven into new patterns. To see and hear the presentation of a human story, perfectly blended in word and action, made concrete and actual, albeit projected in a world of illusion, transcending yet reflecting the forms and features of life, and lifting us up in an exaltation of spirit to a new sense of beauty and rhythmic order: this is the authentic drama of the theatre.

The play is the universe of circumstance which, by implied agreement between players and playgoers, is to limit for the brief traffic of the stage the range of action, thought, and emotion. Such a universe may be narrowly circumscribed in space and time, as within the four walls of a scullery, "between the soup and the savoury," or it may stretch to the confines of a mighty kingdom,

Jumping o'er times;  
Turning the accomplishment of many years  
Into an hour-glass.

The action of the play may arise from the elemental facts of human experience, common to peasant and peer, and entering into our daily observation and conversation: love, hate, fear, want, satisfaction, weariness, ambition, cruelty, loyalty. Or it may spring from more subtle and tenuous reactions to life, which belong only to the experience of the man and woman gifted with a rare discernment and a delicate sensibility.

It is clear therefore that the question "What is a good play?" will be difficult to answer. In fact the "goodness" of a play is always relative to circumstances. It may be easier to answer what is a suitable play for a given group of actors, to be presented on a given stage, and before a given audience. But it may at least be laid down that no play is worth an hour's rehearsal that fails to provide a vehicle for acting, and, since acting is an interpretative art that uses human nature as its material, the play must portray fundamental human character or become merely a surface presentation of conventional morality. The characters to be delineated should not too far exceed the range of knowledge, experience, and emotional sensibility possessed by the actors.

Furthermore, the action of the play should be such as would permit of its representation on a stage of given shape and dimensions and with given appliances. But by means of capable and imaginative production, the limits of possibility might indeed be extended to an indefinite degree. A symbolic rather than a naturalistic setting would enable many difficulties to be surmounted, provided only that the acting too was in the same mood. Inasmuch as all stage technique demands the use of conventions and symbols, the only question is one of scale. The more primitive the stage machinery, the greater the necessity for adopting a symbolic treatment.

Another important consideration in the selecting of plays for acting is the character of the dialogue. Drawing-room wit would not come smoothly off the tongue of a farm labourer, nor could he cast off his rustic heaviness to the extent of being able to catch the swift missile of repartee and throw it nimbly back. The choice of poetic drama would be unwise for actors who had not enjoyed a literary training and whose voices were uncultivated. The dialect play ought to be

attempted only by actors who were native to its idiom and intonation. These considerations are, however, negative. The only positive consideration that can be suggested is that out of a number of otherwise equally eligible plays those should be chosen which offer the English language in forms that are calculated to enrich the everyday speech of the actors. Parts that require the use of barbarous speech will not yield the same personal values as dialogue that puts at the disposal of the actor, for his own subsequent use, a more delicate instrument of expression.

Finally, there is the problem of the audience. To select a play with no regard for the character of those who are to see it performed is to forget one of the most fundamental aspects not only of dramatic but of all artistic expression.

All art is communication. In the beginning the mind of the artist is suddenly taken with the apprehension of some fresh aspect of beauty. This he fastens upon imaginatively, arresting it in some palpable symbol lest it escape him again. But while it is yet in his mind, there is no art. Art results only when the artist, circumscribing himself within the conventions of a medium of expression, communicates his idea to another mind. Only when he has called up an answering response in that other has art been created. Note that the medium of communication must be an instrument of both intelligences. For should the artist express his idea in terms that are totally incomprehensible to others, while he may satisfy himself, he has failed to call into being, in a mind outside his own, an equivalent conception.

Anything that will destroy inertia and encourage a spirit of active participation by the play-going public will help to establish fruitful traditions. Supported by these, the actor need not take so many chances. He can disregard the casual playgoer with his changeful appetite and concentrate on a public with which he has already collaborated. To acquire a habit is to economize effort and to release energy for new experiments in conduct. Habits of thought and behaviour shared by the members of an institution crystallize into traditions that store up experience. A similar economy results from the establishment of a community of interest between actor and audience.



## MODEL STAIRS, WINDOWS, AND EXTERIORS

By HAL D. STEWART

*Author of "Rizzio's Boots," "The Blind Eye," etc.*

WHILE most of the units of model interior sets can be cut quite simply out of cardboard, sometimes an occasion arises when this method is troublesome, and time can be saved by the exercise of a little ingenuity. It is impos-

sible to discuss here every possible occasion on which this may arise, but there are two common features of an interior that are worth discussion. These are (1) windows and (2) staircases.

the astragals will, as a rule, be narrow, and apt to bend or break. A useful method of overcoming this difficulty is shown in Fig. 1. The whole window is cut out and the astragals are added afterwards. For this method use narrow tape,

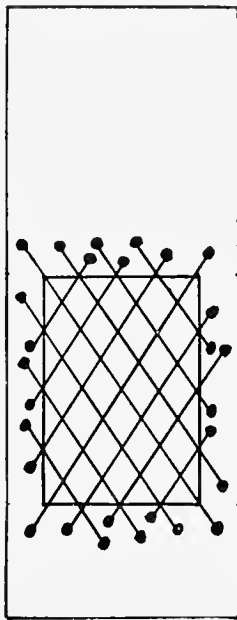


FIG. 1  
REVERSE SIDE OF  
MODEL FLAT  
Showing astragals of  
thread fixed with  
sealing wax

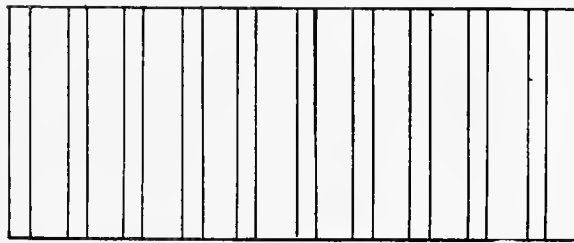


FIG. 2

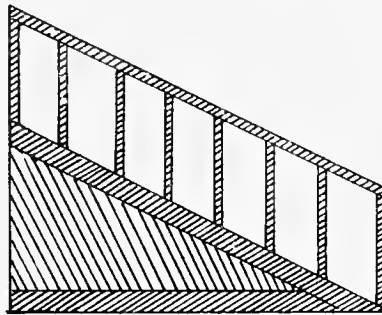


FIG. 3

sible to discuss here every possible occasion on which this may arise, but there are two common features of an interior that are worth discussion. These are (1) windows and (2) staircases.

Windows do not present a great problem as a rule, but it is often difficult to cut out the panes and leave the astragals. With a small scale model,

twine, or stout thread, and fasten it to the reverse side of the model.

There are many ways in which the astragals can be fixed. One of the simplest is to use ordinary sealing wax. Sealing wax has the advantage over gum or paste that it is clean and pleasant to use. If the model is to be in use for a short

time only plasticine will serve the purpose equally well.

When the panes are as small as those shown in Fig. 1, it is difficult to make the model in any other way.

There are, of course, many different varieties of staircases. Generally speaking, however, it is

the lines you have drawn, and make a right angle at each fold. Next cut out the side pieces of the staircase, each side being one unit (Fig. 3), and fix the steps to these by means of adhesive tape.

The newel post or posts should be made separately, with cardboard and adhesive tape, and added afterwards.



*The Stage Photo Co.*

PLATE I

A SCENE FROM THE LONDON PRODUCTION OF "GRAND HOTEL"

best to make the actual steps of stiff paper, and to cut the balustrade, and the side of the staircase, out of cardboard.

The slope of the stair should be correct. The steps themselves must be carefully made to scale. Cut a strip of stiff paper to the width of the stair, and rule parallel lines across it for each riser and tread. Treads are the portions of a stair on which you step. Risers are the perpendicular pieces between these. Fig. 2 shows the paper cut and ruled in this manner. Fold the paper at each of

When the set is complete, it should be furnished in order to give an indication of how it will appear in its final form. The furniture should be as nearly as possible to scale. The material used for furniture and hangings should show the colours that you wish these to be. You will probably be able to buy toy furniture that will be approximately the right size. If not, you must make it. In addition to the materials that you have already used, a few boxes of matches will be helpful. The matches are useful for making chairs, table legs,

etc., and you will probably find a use for the boxes.

Plate I is a photograph of a scene in the London production of *Grand Hotel*. It will be understood that the set is a small one, and that the furniture occupies a considerable amount of floor space. This is a case where model furniture should be carefully made to scale. The furniture is an essential part of the setting, and the position of the bed in relation to that of the doors is important.

When modelling an exterior scene, the principles for an interior apply. The set must be to scale, and the actual pieces of scenery that require to be made must be indicated. The borders must be hung where they can be hung in the theatre.

The first thing to decide is the type of backcloth. If you are lucky enough to have a cyclorama in your theatre, or if you are able to have a curved cloth at the back, this can be shown on the model by bending a piece of cardboard to the required shape and fixing it in position on the model stage. Make certain that you fix it in the correct position. Then cut out each piece of scenery—walls, trees, railings, etc.—which you require. Paint the pieces with water colour, and place them in position.

Plate II shows an exterior set—the Garden of Eden scene from the Masque Theatre's production of *Back to Methuselah*. You will gather that it is a small set—there is little movement in the scene—and that the size of the stage has been reduced by making use of a front cloth with a circular opening. This also reduces the quantity of scenery required, and gets over the difficulty of masking—always a problem with an exterior set.

Notice the tree trunk, the cactus plant in the centre, the foliage in the foreground, and the foliage at the back. All these are separate pieces of scenery. If you were making a model of this scene, these would have to be cut out of separate pieces of cardboard. The foliage of the large tree is shown by an irregularly cut border.

It is always a good plan to have two lines on the model stage to show the line of sight. These are particularly helpful when you are working with an exterior scene. With a box set, the problem of masking obviously does not arise to the same extent. It occurs only with windows and other openings. With an exterior, it is present all the time.

Amateurs are wise to use a plain backcloth wherever possible. If the nature of the play allows, keep the backcloth as simple as possible. The painting should suggest the scene rather than depict it photographically. This applies also to a great deal of the painted scenery, such as trees, foliage, and flowers, which is used in exterior



*The Bulletin, Glasgow*

## PLATE II

A SCENE FROM THE MASQUE THEATRE'S PRODUCTION OF "BACK TO METHUSELAH"

scenes. To reproduce such scenery realistically requires a degree of skill and experience in scene painting that few amateur societies command.

Always remember that it is a great deal easier to make a model of an exterior scene look realistic than to make the scene itself look realistic on the stage. You may be able to paint a most convincing backcloth on the cardboard of your model theatre, but it by no means follows that your scenic artist will have the skill to reproduce this on canvas.

Plate III serves to show how the model theatre may be used to experiment with stage lighting. *Six Characters in Search of an Author* takes place on a bare stage. It may be thought that it will be impossible in these circumstances to make the

scene look attractive. Mr. Tyrone Guthrie, who produced the play, solved the problem, in a most ingenious way, by a skilful use of lighting. The shadows cast by the ladder and furniture, on a plain backcloth, give an effect that is arresting and macabre, and which is much in keeping with the spirit of the play.

of ingenuity, and a great deal of common sense. It would be ridiculous to assert that there is one correct way to make a model. There may be a hundred ways. The methods I have described are methods that may be adopted and that will help the beginner, but when you start to make models you will almost certainly discover devices



*Photo by Pollard Crowther*

### PLATE III

SET FOR "SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR," BY LUIGI PIRANDELLO  
Produced at the Westminster Theatre, London, by Tyrone Guthrie, 1932

This effect might have been arrived at beforehand by using a model theatre and noting the effect of the shadows cast by an electric torch held in different positions.

The reader will, I hope, have gathered from what I have stated about models that the principal qualifications required by the model maker are moderately skilful fingers, a certain amount

of your own. Discovery is one of the attractions of model making which gives initiative great scope.

There are not many amateur societies that make models of their sets as a matter of course. I believe that an appreciable increase in the number would considerably improve the general standard of amateur stage *décor*.

# REHEARSALS TIME-TABLE

By F. E. DORAN

*Secretary, Manchester Playgoers' Club*

ONE aspect of play production that the producer, but not always the cast, fully appreciates, is the importance of rehearsals. No matter how small his part, a player should always be on time, and for a principal to cut a rehearsal should put him in grave risk of losing the part.

If there is one aspect of production in which the producer should and must exercise the strictest discipline it is in the matter of rehearsals. A slack principal is a disgrace and lets down the whole team by creating uncertainty. Sometimes slackness is due to sloppy arrangements by the producer, and he should ensure efficiency by working to a definite schedule, planned well in advance and known to every character.

It is not fair to the cast for a producer to leave everything to chance, and go on from rehearsal to rehearsal, building up in a haphazard way. Rehearsals are the most important part of the mechanism of making a play, and if properly arranged there is no reason why they should not go through perfectly smoothly, if the producer plans well, and the players support him by strict attention to the schedule.

To illustrate my point I give a schedule for a production of *Macbeth*, covering a period of six weeks, say from the beginning of September to Mid-October, for production on 14th, 15th, 16th October.

This schedule should be carefully studied as it has stood the test of a number of productions.

## "MACBETH"

### REHEARSAL AND PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

Week ending	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.	SUN.
Sept. 5	Reading full play (Club room)	Reading full play (Club room)	Staff consultation	Principals	Crowds (Stage Manager in charge)	Full cast walk through	
" 12		Acts 1, 4 (Principals)	Crowds (Stage Manager in charge)	Acts 2, 3 (Principals)		Right through (Principals only)	
" 19	Staff consultation progress	Act 5	Crowds (Stage Manager in charge)	Acts 1, 2		Acts 3, 4, 5	
" 26	Try on costumes	Acts 1, 2, 3	Crowd, costumes, props	Acts 4, 5 (props)		Right through	
Oct. 9	Lighting, scenery, rehearsal	Right through	Right through	Rest	Right through	Right through	
" 16	Principals dress rehearsal	Dress rehearsal (all in)	Full Dress rehearsal	The Show Good luck!	The Show	The Show	

Note how it steadily builds up from woolliness to clarity, until each unit has fitted into the machine.

No matter how excellent a producer's method may be, he must have the fullest trust and co-operation of his cast. This or any other system of working will break down if principals do not attend. It is a thoroughly vicious principle for any member to develop the "all right on the night" philosophy. It will not be all right on the night unless everybody has worked to make it so, and one of the essentials of all-rightness is for *everybody to know what everybody else is going to do*, and this is not possible if members of the cast have not been present to see for themselves and also to be seen by the others.

#### THE ABSENTEE

A deadly setback is the absentee who attends a rehearsal and has to be shown and told what happened at the last. If absolute necessity causes such an absence the understudy should take the rehearsal, and in the interval pass on the necessary instruction to the absentee, and if, when the rehearsal comes, the defaulting member is not according to Cocker, a definite hint about being dropped off the team might bring about a more earnest frame of mind. There should be no nonsense about this, and a producer must be firm. While efficiency and machinery may not be art in the fullest sense, it is sheer nonsense to think that good results will come without hard work and attendance. The big illusion is this nonsense about temperament. Temper is not temperament, only bad manners, and any producer who encourages the tantrums deserves all the bad times that come to him.

Parts should be allotted and script distributed as soon as possible, and for purposes of the schedule of rehearsal I have assumed that the Society Selection Committee had looked ahead as the '32/33 season closed, and knew what they would open with in Oct., 1933. This allowed them to cast their play *BEFORE* the holidays, so that at the first rehearsal on 31st Aug. there was no need to worry about those "words, words, words." No actor can rehearse well when trying to *remember* words. The task of recollection will beat down the effort to experiment with inflections and emphases, and a producer will be building up while the player's memory is

breaking down. This is no good, for at the next rehearsal the player will have forgotten all, or nearly all, the producer told him.

In the case of a new play the cast should be introduced to it by means of a full reading, which in some cases may be used as an audition. If this takes place, say, in late April, or early May, the cast can learn the individual parts in full possession of the value of the part in relation to the whole. It is astonishing how few societies work on the reading system and how many on the old slapdash system of not letting the cast know the entirety of the play until the first time the play is run through completely. This reading should be held as soon as possible. There is nothing like a reading of the play, with each character cast with a separate reader (one fancied for the part is preferable) and with the reading done with the right inflections, as though it were a public performance. Even a rehearsal of this reading is an advantage. If this is done, then the individual members of the cast get the right perspective on their part, and in the mind's-eye can build up the character during the summer months and learn the lines, so that at the first rehearsal a "walk through" is possible. A "walk through" is reciting the lines as they will be given at the performance with rough and ready crossings and positions marked off, ready for closer detail work as the production takes shape.

#### ALTERNATIVE CHART

A vivid variation of the schedule is obtained by colouring the squares a different colour for each section—stage staff, principals, etc.—and marking them off as each date passes. Slackers then see the evil day approaching and stimulate themselves accordingly, the producer sees visible progress, and the various departments see exactly when the hour of trial will come.

The use of these charts removes that sense of uncertainty that is the basis of most of the slacking, and gives no one any excuse for not knowing where he or she stands in the scheme of things.

Working plans remove the necessity for a producer having to explain his scheme of work to his eager but impatient cast, and when the scheme is seen plainly set out it will be found that absenteeism is reduced to a minimum.

A big fault with amateurs is to rehearse *only at*

*rehearsals.* All that should be expected of a producer is that he produces the whole, and it is not fair for one individual, principal or not, to take up more than a due share of time.

If an inflection, or a movement, or an action, is not quite right after a few attempts at one of the early rehearsals, it is tedious and breaks down interest, if the rest of the cast has to hang around for the sake of one or two people working out a detail.

The actors concerned should thoroughly get hold of the producer's idea, then proceed with the general rehearsal, and between rehearsals bring the difficult detail to perfection.

A similar attitude should be adopted to the learning of the words. It is not fair to a producer if the cast never study the book except at rehearsals. A rehearsal under the producer's orders is the time for action, construction, subtlety, certainty, and not for the learning of lines. Nobody can rehearse well with one hand holding a book. No rehearsal can go well when the prompter is continually butting in, not because he wants to, but because he has to.

#### USE THE PROPS

When once the cast has a thorough grasp of the author's intention, and the producer's idea, and when crossings, gestures, positioning, etc., are all fairly grasped, the actual props, such as swords, pikes, handbags, etc., should be used, or if not the actual things, things as near the real things as possible. Familiarity with props is a good thing: it prevents fumbling and last-minute discoveries of an awkward character.

I remember once being interested in a show that was being produced by a young producer, and I gave him this advice. As it was free, it was disregarded, with the result that on the dress rehearsal night, the supper table projected over the footlights because he had forgotten that the dais projected 3 ft. from the balcony cloth, in its turn 4 ft. from the backcloth, so that 7 ft. of his 14 ft. stage was taken up. The table was 9 ft. long and had to be placed sideways along one side, as important business took place at the O.P. side round the table end. If that young producer had taken the tip of an old hand, and worked on chalk lines and actual props or copies, he would not have had the nerve-wracking dress rehearsal from which

he suffered. Foresight is a big thing in good production, and rehearsals can be used for all sorts of things besides rehearsing the cast.

#### BAD HABITS

A wise producer will not allow his cast to smoke during rehearsals unless they are going to do so at the same time "on the night." We are all creatures of habit, and none more so than the cigarette smoker. If a slack producer allows his cast to smoke at incorrect times during rehearsals, then it is a million to one that at the dress rehearsal that particular player will not know what to do with his hands. He used to be fingering a cigarette, but now he has no cigarette; consequently he has a hand and an arm too many. The correct use of the hands is difficult at all times, but when use is complicated by ignorance and self-consciousness, it is much more difficult. Again, when rehearsing a costume play the men actors should not be allowed to keep their hands in their trousers pockets; otherwise, when they get their tights on and find no pockets there will be much fumbling. I state this just to emphasize that a rehearsal should be a rehearsal. It is a serious thing, and should approximate in all details as much as possible to the real show. But there is staleness to be avoided, and a prudent producer keeps his cast fresh by always keeping something back and having something in view—a costume try on, rehearsal with props, rehearsal with costumes, rehearsal with costumes and make-up, and so on, so that the cast has always something fresh to look forward to. This question of staleness is one that particularly affects the small part holder. It is wearisome to be waiting for two or three hours, maybe three nights a week, for the moment when one must enter and say "My Lord, the carriage waits."

Yet it is important that that particular small part shall be rehearsed, and rehearsed well with the principal players. The player says only a few words, makes only a momentary appearance, but it may be that his or her entrance with that particular message at that particular moment is the very pivot on which the play turns. There is no such thing as an unimportant part. Some parts are long, some are short, but all are important—like the pause of the orator, or the calm before the storm.

Nevertheless, it is an undue strain when a capricious or exacting producer insists on attendance of these small part actors over a long period of time, and I feel that it is a mistake. No producer should ask more than his cast can usefully give, and if a player can do a small part in a few short, sharp rehearsals why waste time by keeping him waiting?

I have appealed, and will continue to appeal, for loyal and regular support for the producer, but that support is only deserved, particularly in amateur societies, by reciprocity. A person must feel that time is being profitably employed, and it is not good enough to be asked to give up two or three evenings a week, for six weeks or so, to make a brief appearance.

The solution lies in recognition of the fact that the production of a play has many departments. The acting is most in the limelight, but there are all sorts of odd jobs that require organization and execution. Apart from understudying, which is important, there is an enormous amount of detail work that small part players can be getting on with while waiting for their little piece. If they are women, there is the wardrobe; if men, the properties or electric wiring. Always there is the office side of the job, envelope addressing, etc., for men or women.

#### A GOOD STORY

Dr. L. du Garde Peach tells a good story in this connexion of his village players at Great Hucklow in Derbyshire. Dr. Peach had been asking for members and supporters for his dramatic society, and after dwelling at length on the community value of the work, drove the point home by telling his hearers that no matter what their occupation, interest, or vocation was, there was always a job for them in a dramatic society, and he invited offers after the meeting. In due course a member of his audience told him how much he had been impressed by the arguments and how anxious he was to help in any possible way, but as he could not act, or use tools, or sing, he did not see where his study and knowledge of philately could be usefully employed. But he was soon absorbed with the work when Dr. Peach put him on to sticking entertainment stamps on tickets!!

The whole principle is to keep all minds curious, alert, and occupied, eagerly looking forward to the completion of the task in hand, or looking for the surprise round the corner of time. Each rehearsal should see a job done, and a new one dawning.

#### A GREAT ADVENTURE

If a producer can keep alive this sense of adventure, the cast is kept in a state of expectation that augurs well for the excitement of the opening and produces that electric atmosphere which communicates itself to the audience, so that players and audience are welded into one unity. The production of a play should be a great adventure, with everybody working as a member of a team or crew, each with an allotted task, great or small, which falls into place on the night of the full-dress rehearsal.

There is a superstition that a chaotic dress rehearsal presages a good first night. Perhaps it does. I cannot deny that I have seen dress rehearsals which were more like a Palladium crazy week than the culmination of a period of organized work and which preceded a first night that went off as smoothly as possible. Also I have seen a first night go awry after an excellent dress rehearsal. Nevertheless, I believe that I am giving good advice in preaching the elimination of all uncertainty by study and organized effort. Surely the cumulative effect of rehearsals should be so organized that, apart from the psychological factor, the opening night should be as good as any. I do not believe that it is good to trust to chance or inspiration. The chances should be taken, and the inspiration invoked, before the show, and not during the run. Rehearsals are periods of trial and error, experiment and elimination, and everything should be cut and dried before the curtain rises on the last dress rehearsal. The only uncertain factor should be the reactions of the audience, and cast and producer should feel that when the curtain rises on the first night, each and every one has honestly and conscientiously done his or her individual best to give the audience that which has been promised on the one side and paid for on the other—a good show.



## HENRY VII

By NEVIL TRUMAN

*Hon. Secretary, Nottingham Playgoers' Club*

FROM 1485 to 1509, the period of the reign of the new Tudor king, dignity returned to fashion with the long gown and chain and the gable hat, and continued throughout the whole of the Tudor line's rule, with slight returns to the freakish in the more exaggerated modes of Henry the Eighth and Elizabeth, though the general modes retained their dignity. Costume was symbolic of the Tudor monarchs themselves since all (with the exception of the young Edward VI) had greatness in no small measure, and despite the tempestuous outbursts of the royal Blue Beard and the virgin Queen, they always managed to keep their personal dignity.

It was a period that became increasingly prosperous, for there were no wars, and the nation had time and money with which to develop its civilization. There sprang up a new race of nobles whose claims to peerages, like those of our own day, depended on money instead of on birth and breeding. This position was reflected in the increased gorgeousness of materials and designs for clothes. Rich silks, figured brocades and damasks, stamped velvets and cloth of gold, were imported from Italy and the East, and jewellery became massive and finely wrought, especially in ladies' girdles and pendants and the brooches in men's shirts.

The new note was in the increased importance of the white shirt, richly embroidered in black and white thread, and even in colours, and in the stomacher or waistcoat, which was of brocade. The ladies originated the gable hat and abandoned the fantastic wired shapes of the Lancastrian and Yorkist times. Slashings began to appear, somewhat timidly, in Henry VII's reign. On the whole, costuming in this reign was sober and restrained, and thoroughly sound. It was during the reign of his son, who spent his father's savings, and then robbed the Church for more, that clothing became really extravagant and less dignified and quiet.

The *Linen Shirt* (men) was gathered at the neck into pleats and embroidered with red and

black thread. It showed through the slashings of the stomacher and from elbow to wrist if the stomacher had no sleeves.

The *Stomacher* (men) was of patterned fabric, rich and elaborate, with its floral design conventionalized and outlined in gold thread. It reached



HENRY VII

from the chest, where it was square cut at the neck, to the waist, where it was laced or tied to the thighs.

The *Doublet* (men), worn over the stomacher, was close fitting, and quilted, as in the previous reigns, but was open down the front in a V-shape and loosely laced across, thus showing the stomacher. It had a short hip-covering skirt, or a slightly longer skirt, and its sleeves were slashed at the elbow and hung down from there loosely, again revealing the stomacher (if sleeved) or the shirt sleeves. The doublet sleeves were close from elbow to shoulder.

The *Ferkin* (men) was occasionally worn over

the doublet, and had either no sleeves or wide or hanging sleeves. These garments were held to the waist by a narrow *Sash*.

The *Gown* (men) was the characteristic note of this age, and was long, but the sleeves had become mere cylindrical rolls of cloth with lengthwise arm openings. A broad square cut collar extended



down the back and continued along the edges of the front in revers faced with silk or fur.

The *Petti-cote* (men) was a shorter version of the long coat.

The *Gown* (women) was long, and made from rich silks with a broad square cut neck outlined with bands of embroidery. A train was added by the upper classes. The sleeves were close at the top and wide at the elbow and banded, often with fur. It was the custom to lift the skirt to show the under dress of rich material, generally figured. The gown was occasionally fur-lined.

The *Chemise* (women) was white and pleated, and showed above the neck opening of the gown.

The *Underdress* was on the same cut as the over-gown, but was of figured damask or woven tapestry or cut velvet, but the pattern was fairly simple as the split opening of the over-gown did not come into fashion until Henry VIII's time, so that until then the under-gown was not permanently displayed.

The *Cloak* (women) was full and ample, and had

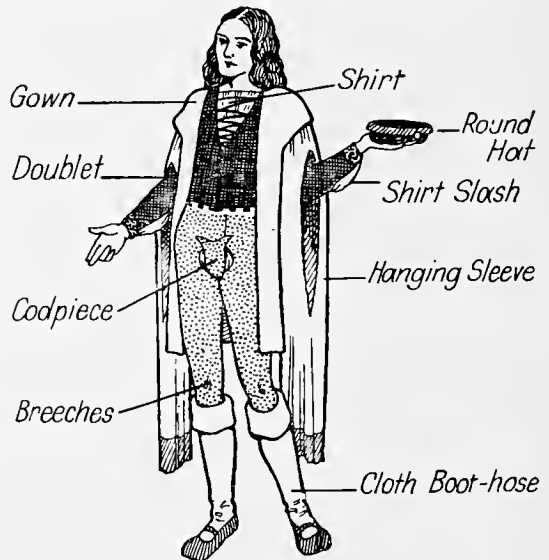
open sleeves, which were necessary owing to the bulky lines of the clothes that were worn under it.

*Tights* (men) were of fabric, silk or velvet, cut on the cross. Dandies wore striped tights, which had slashed and puffed knees. A curious mode was to have a different material and colour at the hips, and this was slashed and sometimes attached to the body of the garment by loose lacings. Through all these slashings showed the underclothes of white, which were slightly pulled through to form little puffs.

*Shoes* were of velvet or leather with bulbous rounded toes, and were sometimes slashed to show the coloured feet beneath them.

*Hair* (men) was worn flowing to the shoulders, and was usually parted in the middle. *Hair* (women) was also parted in the middle, but only a small portion was visible in front on the forehead, as the rest of the head was completely covered by the headdress.

*Hats* (men) were of velvet in two shapes. One



had the brim turned up on all sides and the four corners pinched together to form a square cap—an early form of the biretta now worn by the clergy. The other had a broad brim, turned up but without cornering, to which were added feathers turning backwards. This type was worn over a close-fitting cap.

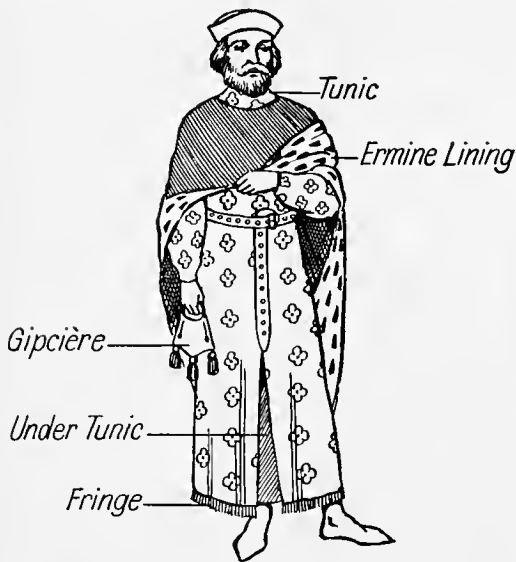


A TUDOR MERCHANT AND HIS WIFE



*Hats* (women). The Gable or Kennel type was the characteristic piece, and was in three sections. The first was a white coif or close-fitting cap, over which was placed a piece of material in silk, velvet, or embroidered cloth, nearly always black. It was stiffened like a roof or tent so that it hung in a point at the top and angles at the sides, and there were strings at the sides with which to tie back the hanging ends from the neck. A stiff band of material embroidered on its front edge with pearls was added to the whole, to show in front. It, too, was stiffened and bent in the centre and placed over the coif. The coif was first, the pearl band next, and then the black, embroidered veiling.

Another type was the Franco-Flemish, which was simpler in outline. Made of dark material, it covered the head and sides of the face with ample folds. It had a bright lining, which was turned back on the top of the head in front to add a note of colour.

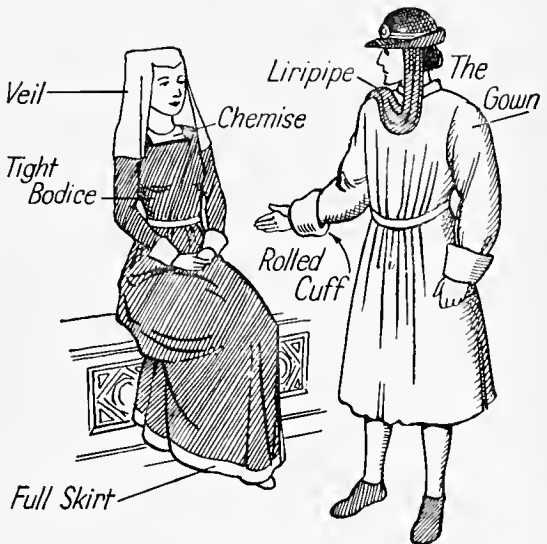


GENTLEMAN, 1450-1500 (ALL SAINTS, YORK)

Older women wore the pleated barbe of linen with a plain arched linen hood faintly dipping in front on the forehead (the precursor of the Mary Queen of Scots hat). This was put on over a stiffened front, or the material itself was stiffened and hung over the face and outward on the shoulders. The *Barbe* was a kind of pleated bib,

covering the chest up to the chin and occasionally extending over the chin.

*Jewellery* (men) was principally shown in the massive and beautiful neck chains that hung, like a modern Mayor's official chain, from each shoulder in a wide curve across breast and back. Pendants were added. These were crosses and



MERCHANT CLASS

other designs with a touch of the Renaissance, such as allegorical figures of cupids, arabesques, and conventionalized natural forms. Rings and belts were also of gold, and all the jewellery was heavy and massive to harmonize with the heavy and massive lines of the clothes worn. A thin, delicate piece of goldsmith's work would have looked tawdry and out of place.

*Jewellery* (women) was chiefly centred in the long waist chain with a long hanging end reaching three-quarters of the way down the skirt. From it depended a large round pendant. Elaborate crosses with pearl drops at the ends were used as brooches on the breast. Occasionally brooches adorned the men's hats. Rings were large and square.

#### PEASANTS

Peasants wore much the same type of clothes but in plainer materials and simpler cut. Stockings were of white wool, and slipper-shoes of leather were popular. Outer cloaks were worn by wealthy citizens only. Shirts were of coarse,

unbleached linen of a grey-brown shade with turn-down collars, or upstanding collars cut away slightly in front. The main robe was cassock-like and girdled with a belt. Working class people wore a shorter tunic.

### SUMMARY

#### *Dress*

##### MEN

Linen shirt—pleated at neck, embroidered black and white thread, shows through slashed points of

Stomacher—sleeve optional, patterned fabric waistcoat, from chest to waist, where it is laced or tied to tights.

Doublet—over stomacher, close fit, quilted, open in front to show stomacher, short skirt, close sleeves to elbow. From elbow to wrist reveals shirt or stomacher sleeves.

Jerkin—hip length, sleeves hanging, or wide, or none.

Sash—narrow.

Gown—long; sleeves cloth cylinders with long arm slits, broad square collar with front revers.

Petti-cote—short version of long coat.

#### *Legs*

Tights—fabric with codpiece, striped, slashed and puffed knee, hips different colour.

#### *Feet*

Shoes—velvet or leather, bun toed, slight slashings and puffs.

#### *Hair*

Flowing to shoulders. Square cut. Beard rare.

#### *Hats*

Turn-up brim, four corners pinched together. Broad heavy brim with back-turning feathers over skull cap.

#### *Jewellery*

Gold chains with pendants (see also Women).

#### *Dress*

##### WOMEN

Chemise—pleated white, shows above gown.

Gown—long, rich silk, broad square neck outlined with embroidery band, train. Sleeve close at top, wide at elbow and hand, fur banded. Tight bodice. Lift to show—

Underdress—costly figured material.

Cloak—full and ample, open sleeves.

#### *Hair*

Parted middle and brushed back, only visible in front.

#### *Hats*

Gable—white coif, over which black silk or velvet stiffened like sloping roof, and stiff



ELIZABETH OF YORK

band of material pearl embroidered. Side strings to tie back from neck.

Franco-Flemish—ample dark veil on head and shoulders, turned back on top to show gay lining.

Barbe—pleated linen with plain arched linen hood, slight front dip, on stiffening over head and shoulders, with barbe-pleated bib on chest.

#### *Jewellery*

Long belts, with pendants, necklaces, and rings, massive and finely wrought for both sexes, and pendants.

# LIGHT AND COLOUR IN RELATION TO MAKE-UP

By ALFRED HARTOP

*Perruquier and Lecturer to Amateur Societies*

IT is well known that daylight reveals things in a manner that cannot be reproduced by any known form of artificial light; the artificial light that will not destroy natural colour remains to be discovered. We must, therefore, be prepared to use judgment that is based upon sound knowledge of the relation of light and colour in order to determine the effect that intensity, direction, and colour of stage lighting will have on any scheme of make-up that is employed.

Many theories of light and colour phenomena have been advanced from time to time by eminent artists and scientists, but there has been much disagreement, into which we need not enter. It will suffice if we confine our inquiry to what is generally acceptable from our point of view.

Light is the physical cause of our sensation of sight. This is proved by the fact that objects are invisible when they are not illuminated by natural or artificial means. The flame of a match can be the origin of some stimulus, to which the name of light is given, which is essential to vision. The great majority of objects themselves emit no light, and are, therefore, known as non-luminous; but some, as, for instance, the sun, have the property of emitting light, and are, therefore, known as luminous. Luminous objects, such as the sun, a lamp, gas flame, electric light, etc., are visible because of their own luminosity, which consists of a number of luminous points from each of which rays of light proceed in divergent directions. Some of these rays reach the eye of an observer and produce vision.

Non-luminous objects are visible only because of the property they have of reflecting and diffusing the light that falls on them from luminous objects. Thus, an object becomes visible by the light that it reflects to the eye of an observer, while its degree of visibility and definition is determined by the nature and size of the reflecting

parts, the amount of light falling upon it, and its distance from the eye.

Light-emitting objects appear to increase in size as they increase in brightness. For instance, the sun appears larger when it is shining brightly than when its rays are partially obscured; also, there is an apparent increase in the thickness of an electric filament when its brightness is increased. This is accounted for by the irradiation of the luminous rays, and is, also, common to some degree in objects that only reflect light. Consequently, a bright object, other things being equal, will always appear larger than a dark object of the same size.

It is generally accepted that white light, which is considered as pure light, is composed of all the colours that are found naturally or are made artificially, and can be decomposed into its constituent coloured rays, or its several colours can be recombined into a beam of white light. If a beam of white light is allowed to pass through a glass prism, the light is refracted, or bent and separated into coloured rays, which, when allowed to fall on a screen in a darkened room, produce a beautiful band of colour. This is known as the solar spectrum, and contains every gradation of pure colour in which can easily be recognized the six principal colours—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet.

The difference of colour is due to the different rates of vibration, and, therefore, different wave lengths of the various rays. As we follow the colours from red to violet, the process is similar to playing an octave of music, for colour is to light what pitch is to sound. Red is represented by a low note, violet by a high note.

We have seen how what is known as refraction produces colour by splitting up white light; but the colour of objects we are accustomed to seeing is the result of reflection, as practically all the colour in the world is produced by reflection of

light. It should be remembered that colour does not exist in and by itself, but is simply a matter of sensation, that is, an impression produced on the optic nerves of the eye by the nature of the rays of light returned from an object by reflection. In other words, colour arises from the treatment, on the part of an object, of the light that falls



FIG. 21. FLORENCE GREGSON

upon it. What we term the natural colours of objects are mainly due to the fact that they return to the eye only certain definite colours out of those that are combined in a beam of white light. Non-luminous objects have the power of extinguishing, or absorbing, the light that enters them. This power is also selective, that is to say, the objects absorb some of the colour rays and reflect others; thus the colour of an object is due to light that it does not absorb, and is returned to the eye. For example, when the light that enters an object is wholly absorbed, the object is black; an object that absorbs all the waves equally, but not totally, is grey; an object that absorbs the various waves unequally is coloured; and if an

object can return to the eye all the colours in the same proportions as they exist in white light, it is white. Thus an object that appears to be red under white light is one that has selected the red wavelengths of the light to reflect and absorbed all others.

It should be noted that objects of all colours, illuminated by white light, reflect white light from their exterior surfaces. It is the light which has plunged to a certain depth below the surface, which has been sifted there by selective absorption and then discharged from the object by interior reflection, which, in general, gives the object its colour. Thus a red object selects only red rays to reflect, and, therefore, appears red to the eye.

But the colour of an object also depends upon the nature of the light that falls upon it, because if rays of the colour that it is best fitted to return to the eye are absent, or few in number, the colour will be dim and unsatisfactory. It is a familiar fact that it is impossible to judge the true value of colours when they are seen in artificial light. The reason for this is that they are exposed to light that is lacking in certain rays, and the objects are, therefore, unable to reflect all the colours that would be reflected under normal conditions.

A coloured light is a light that is incomplete; that is to say, it is lacking in one or more of the colours that constitute white light. For instance, if we perceive a red light, it is to be supposed that the other principal colours (blue and yellow) which, combined with red, produce white light, have been subtracted from the white light, and that red is all that remains. Similarly, if a green light is visible, we may conclude that the red rays, from some cause, have been withheld. In other words, whatever colour is visible is a result of its complementary colour being subtracted from pure white light.

It is not to be supposed that colour is a quality that a substance retains under all conditions. If such were the case, an object, for instance, painted green would always remain green, even when exposed to other than white light. We have seen that it can appear green only when green is contained in the light to which it is exposed. The paint serves simply the purpose of absorbing all but the green rays, which are reflected. This can easily be proved if it is exposed to red light. In



this case the object will be unable to send out green rays because none has been received, and it will, therefore, appear black.

From what has been stated about the nature of light, it follows that all artificial colouring processes are simply the production of such a condition on or within the surface of an object that it will reflect or return certain luminous wavelengths—a colour—to the eye and suppress or absorb others. The best method of producing these artificial colours upon different surfaces constitutes the art of the painter, the dyer, and the chemist; in fact, all who seek the connexion between the constitution and optical properties of natural and chemical compounds. Such compounds or colouring materials, usually termed "pigments," include dry, earthy substances such as ochre; vegetable, such as indigo and logwood; or animal, such as cochineal; or artificial, which are the products of chemical synthesis. These pigments are made as similar to the spectrum colours as possible, but it is impossible to manufacture a pigment so pure that it will match exactly a spectrum colour.

The pigment theory of colour is based on the assumption that there are three primary colours—red, yellow, and blue—which are independent and separate pigments, differing widely from each other.

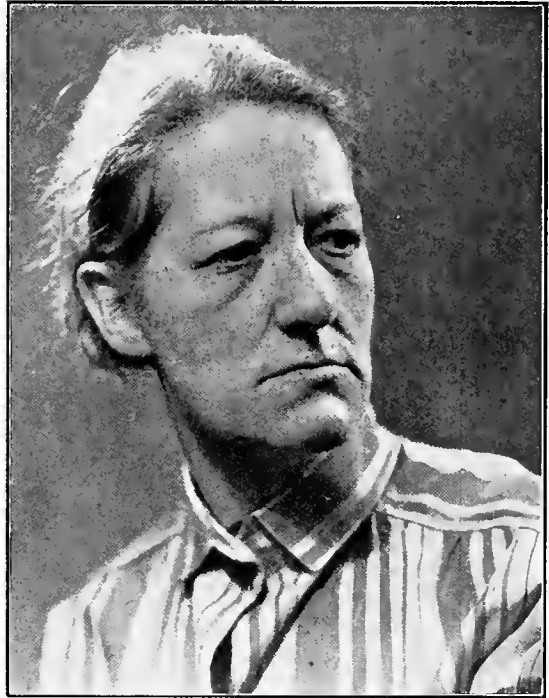
#### MAKE-UP FOR MIDDLE AGE

Between the accomplishment of ordinary "straight" make-up and what may be considered essentially "character" studies, there lies a province of characterization that presents many difficulties to the inexperienced. I refer to the numerous cases that arise where it is necessary for a young player to convey the appearance of increased age. It is by no means easy to get the effect of age upon a youthful face by a few lines and touches of grease paint; and it must not be assumed that age is merely a matter of lines and wrinkles, although, of course, it is much expressed by them.

It is not old age that presents the most difficulties, as in such cases much of the effect can be achieved with the aid of false hair, etc. Actually, the most elusive period to portray is that between thirty and fifty years of age, for changes then are subtle to perceive and still more subtle to simulate.

We arrive at a better understanding of how to deal with these cases when we inquire into the gradual changes that take place from youth to advanced age with regard to colour of complexion, form, and expression of features.

Normally, though subject to modification as the result of inheritance, climatic or social



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FIG. 22. FLORENCE GREGSON AS MRS. OAKROYD  
IN "THE GOOD COMPANIONS"

environment, and personal habits, change takes place in the colour of the skin. It changes from the rosy tint of youth to become darker and more ruddy during the years of prime age, and fades to a parchment-like sallowness in extreme old age. The soft and velvet texture of the skin gives place to coarseness and wrinkles. There is, also, a diminishing of colour, lustre, and fullness of the eyes, accompanied, in the majority of cases, by evidence of greying and falling of the hair.

The principal changes in form from youth to adulthood are in the shape of the face and the greater prominence of the features that follows expansion of the bones of the face. The face of

the adult is lengthened, and a prominent ridge is developed along the course of the eyebrows. Several new characters are given to the countenance by the enlargement of the upper jaw-bone. This has the effect of raising and lengthening the bones of the nose, and of making the cheek-bones project farther. Another effect is to make the angle of the lower jaw recede more towards the ear, and to acquire *more distinctness*.

The form of the face and the feature is only the groundwork of expression. By the habit of expression the countenance is improved or degraded, and the characters of virtue or vice are imprinted.

Everyone is familiar with descriptions of faces such as "What a good face!" "What a wicked face!" "That is an intelligent face!" Without words the face expresses kindness or cruelty, joy or grief, love or hatred, hope or fear, every desire and every emotion—all the multiform life that issues from the brain to dominate and mould the features. In the face we find assembled all the organs of the five senses; nerves sufficiently delicate, and mobile muscles to form one of the most expressive pictures of human nature.

From the foregoing remarks it will be realized that a girl or young woman who is cast for a middle-aged part will find it necessary to age her

face by making subtle changes. Character type requires first consideration. If the type to be portrayed is that of a society woman, it may be assumed that she will have retained much of her beauty. The foundation should be a compound of Nos. 5 and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  or 9, and the rouge on the cheeks of Carmine 2 or 3, placed not quite so near the eyes as in a straight make-up, thus taking away some of their brilliance, and suggesting a droop in the cheeks. To give the eyes a deeper inset, a rather strong shadow of reddish-grey is placed in the sockets between the eyes and nose, and faded away at the outer corners of the eyebrows. The temples may be shaded, the shading extending down in front of the ears, and also appearing in the hollow between the mouth and chin.

Particular attention is drawn to Figs. 21 and 22, which provide a typical example of how the subtle changes under consideration have been successfully achieved with a minimum of material skilfully applied. Analysed, the type is of a working-class woman, the general expression conveying an impression of a dominating, masterful temperament. Note the accurate shadows in the eye sockets, from the eye corners to the cheek-bones, and the light and shade of the nose and chin. The hair, by its style and suggestion of approaching greyness, is of marked importance.

## DIMMERS—SWITCHBOARDS

By C. HAROLD RIDGE, A.R.S.M., D.I.C., and F. S. ALDRED, A.M.Inst.C.E.

*Consulting Engineers*

**R**ESISTANCE units can easily be changed to suit altered loads or to replace any that have been damaged. The plate is carried in a metal case, and a bank of four such dimmers is seen in Fig. 38. The contact arm moves through  $180^\circ$  by means of rack and pinion gear, the former being attached to the link bar that is connected to the operating handle. Normally, each handle lever swings loosely on the front shaft. This gives individual operation, but a quarter turn locks the handle to the shaft, and then all four dimmers can be simultaneously operated by the long master-control lever; or by turning the hand wheel and driving the shaft through the worm and wheel at the left-hand end slow motion operation is obtained. The dimmers shown in Figs. 36, 37, and 38 are manufactured by Messrs. Mansell & Ogan, Ltd., who can supply them wound to *CD Specification*, which has provision for 100 contacts and with which 50 per cent lumen output at the lamps does not occur until 25 to 30 studs have been passed.

The "Quead" Dimmer, manufactured by Messrs. William Geipel, Ltd., is of the plate type, and possesses several novel features. Figs. 39 and 40 show internal and front views of this Dimmer. The resistance units are made of nickel chrome strips wound on mica formers, enclosed in flat steel cases with lugs for direct mounting upon the contact studs. They are readily renewable. One hundred contact studs are provided, and the Dimmer is graded for flickerless dimming from "full" to "off."

The electrical energy absorbed by a dimmer in action is converted into heat, and it must be dissipated by designing for sufficient radiation surface. In a properly designed dimmer, the heat will rise to a predetermined temperature above that of the surrounding air, and, provided its rated load is not exceeded, will remain at that figure irrespective of the length of time during which it is in circuit. Such a dimmer is said to be "continuously rated." A dimmer not so rated would

probably increase in temperature until it became burnt out. To prevent damage, dimmers are usually capable of carrying safely loads up to 20 per cent in excess of their rated capacity, but it is a bad practice to overload them, and they should be used only for loads for which they are designed. Apart from the question of damage, an overloaded dimmer dims out the lamps before it has reached the end of its travel, whilst an underloaded dimmer has reached the end with the lamps still giving sufficient light to produce an unpleasant flicker when the switch is opened.

A bank of dimmers should never be erected in a confined space. There should be plenty of room above them, with free air circulation and ventilation. These requirements are enforced by various licensing authorities. The heating of dimmers imposes limits to the practical load that a plate will carry. About 4,000 watts per plate is the present limit, and, should it be necessary to dim larger loads, two or more are used and the load is divided between them instead of connecting the plates in parallel and the combination in series with the load. If a combination is used, should a fault occur on one of the plates, causing a break in the circuit, the other plates would have to carry the full load with almost certain disaster in consequence.

Dimmers should be connected in the negative side on a D.C. installation, and in the neutral if the supply is A.C., to reduce the potential difference between windings and frame.

It is possible to construct dimmers that are capable of operating successfully on two different loads. They are called "Plus and Minus" dimmers. One of 1500 watts  $\pm$  or  $-\frac{1}{3}$  could dim either a 1000 or a 2000 watt load. Similarly, a 2250 watt  $\pm$  or  $-\frac{1}{3}$  dimmer could deal with a 1500 or a 3000 watt load. These are useful for controlling stage "dip" circuits or those having variable loads, but the fine grading for colour-mixing work is not possible with this class of dimmer.

Well-designed dimmers should be continuously

rated, with not less than 80 steps of resistance between "full on" and "off." The resistance wire should be non-rusting and unaffected by open-air conditions, acid or other fumes, and should have a negligible temperature coefficient. Sections made from wire of finer gauge than 19 S.W.G. should be wound on a fire-resisting rect-

perature rise of a dimmer on its rated load should not exceed 300° Centigrade above the surrounding air, the test being taken after a constant temperature has been reached. The temperature of the frame or casing should not exceed 70° Centigrade in free air.

Consideration of dimmers has been confined to the resistance type, chiefly because this is the only type that is universally met with to-day. Dimming can be accomplished by other methods, and much experimental work is being done on new lines. The greatly extended use of alternating current makes the use of dimmers operating on "reactance" possible. These dimmers are much less wasteful of energy than the resistance type, and control the primary voltage by imposing voltages created by induction, these latter being in turn controlled by a secondary D.C. supply of relatively small magnitude. For remote control work such dimmers offer distinct benefits, and for dealing with large loads have been used in the United States of America for some years. Technical difficulties have so far prevented their use for the smaller capacities that are usually

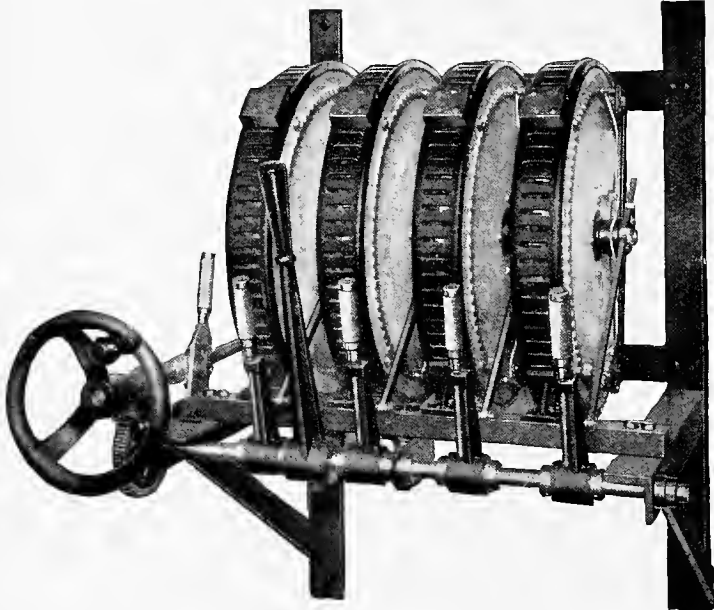


FIG. 38

*Mansell & Ogan, Ltd.*

angular former for stability. The latter, if of a hygroscopic nature, should be securely fixed to the framework and insulated from all earthed metal. The insulation resistance of an individual dimmer should be not less than 20 megohms when tested with a 500 volt "Megger." The windings should be so graded that a bank of low wattage lamps equal to the dimmer capacity can be dimmed without flicker. Dimmers with any or all sections in circuit should be capable of standing a 20 per cent overload for three hours without damage or permanent displacement of any part. The moving brush in contact with the studs should be, preferably, of anti-friction carbon, of such composition and cross-sectional area that excessive voltage drop, with consequent heating, cannot occur at the contacts. A definite "off" contact stud should be provided in the case of A.C., and a "flick" switch for D.C. The tem-

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required for stage switchboards. The control of voltage by special transformers, with secondary windings having manyappings, and also auto-transformers, have been tried on the continent, and the latter have been used at a private theatre recently built in this country.

Photo-electric cells, developed in connexion with television, are being used in conjunction with secondary circuits having lamps and dimmers controlling the light falling in them. Although interesting and ingenious work, which, in course of time, will probably produce practical results, is being carried on in this field, at the moment it is safe to say that the resistance dimmer holds the field.

#### CONTROL OF STAGE LIGHTING

A stage electrical circuit consists of a lamp or lamps, a switch, fuses, and a dimmer to control

the intensity of the light output, all being connected by the necessary wiring, shown diagrammatically in Fig. 33. A number of such circuits forms the stage lighting installation, the switches, fuses, and dimmers being grouped for convenience of control to form the stage switchboard.

Main supply cables are run and connected to

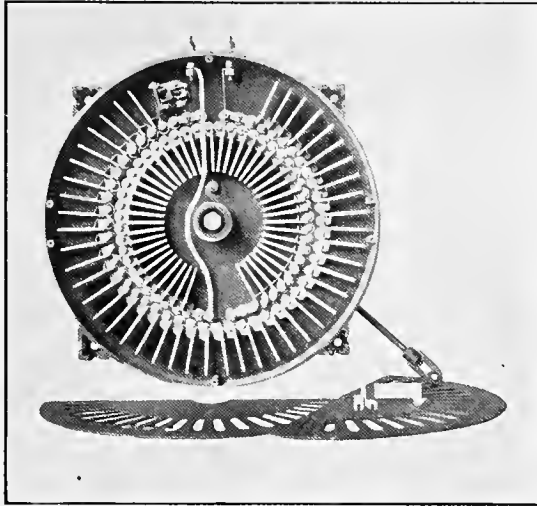


FIG. 39  
*William Geipel, Ltd.*

the copper bars, usually fixed at the back of the board, called bus-bars, to which the individual circuits are connected and from which they are fed.

A switch is connected in the main cables, the opening of which cuts off the supply to the board, and, in consequence, to the lamps, the result being a "black-out." On account of noise of operation, this switch has to be away from the stage area. It is therefore usual to use a contactor, which is a type of switch that is operated by means of an electro-magnetic coil. It can be placed in the stage basement or other suitable position, and the small auxiliary switch controlling the coil current, which causes the switch to open or close, can be mounted on the stage switchboard for operation by the attendant.

In the simplest type of switchboard, a pair of bus-bars would be sufficient, with one hand-operated, or contactor, switch to control the supply to the bars. As switchboards increase in size and requirements, and are influenced also by the type

and conditions of the electrical supply, the number of bus-bars must be increased and sub-divided into sections, each section feeding a definite portion of the stage-lighting apparatus and having its own contactor arranged so as to operate singly, in groups with other sections, or by means of a master contactor control switch. All sections and contactors can be operated and controlled simultaneously for a total "black-out."

An electric supply authority distributing current on a two-wire system permits the use of a simple type of stage switchboard, but, with the exception of small stages, with correspondingly small lighting loads, the distribution will generally be on a three-wire or four-wire system, in which case the load has to be divided or "balanced" across the "outers" and the "middle" or "neutral" wire.

This balancing of the loads, including lighting, power, and heating, is not difficult in the case of installations in large houses, churches, and factories, and can usually be kept well within the limits of "out-of-balance" loading of 10 kw.—an

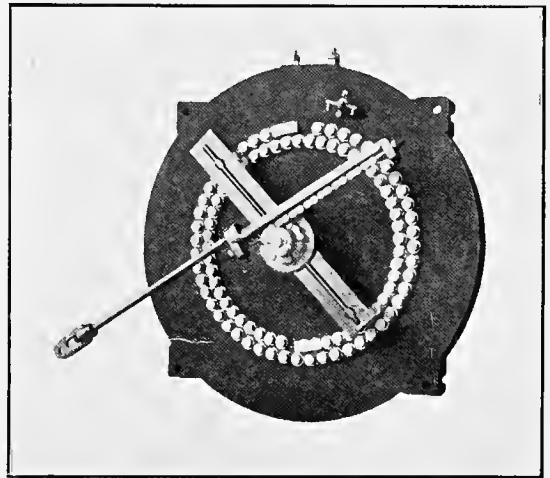


FIG. 40  
*William Geipel, Ltd.*

average figure imposed by supply authorities. With stage loads, however, it becomes extremely difficult to maintain a balance, the distribution and amount of lighting varying between wide limits according to the requirements of the producer. This is further complicated by the rule that the different phases or sides of a distribution

system shall not be connected to the same apparatus, such as a batten or float. It will, therefore, be appreciated that the system of distribution greatly influences the design of the stage electrical lay-out, and also of the switchboard itself, which must be arranged with the various circuits fed in such a way that large out-of-balance currents are not possible under a wide range of working conditions. It should be noted that balance must be under working, and not total connected, loads, this arrangement providing a practical as opposed to a theoretical solution.

The complete separation of the phases throughout an installation is desirable, not only in the battens and other apparatus accessible to non-qualified persons, where it is obligatory, but also at switchboards accessible only to experienced operators, where the circuits on each phase should be grouped with a small dividing fillet or barrier between the groups. This arrangement makes for clarity, and although it does not prevent an operator, who may have to carry out minor adjustments or repairs while the board is alive, from coming into contact with two phases, it does at least draw his notice to the phase grouping, and limits the possibility of his getting a shock. On the stage the phases may be segregated, possibly by placing all overhead lighting on one phase; floor circuits, such as dips and proscenium spots, on another phase, and front-of-house stage lighting, together with the auditorium decorative lighting, on the third.

Until recent years it was the practice for the switches and fuses to be mounted on insulating panels as a separate unit. The dimmers, if of the metallic type, were suitably grouped and mounted on a frame to form a dimmer bank fixed in an adjacent position. If liquid dimmers were used, they were probably in a room or enclosure underneath the stage, with tracker wires brought up to a frame, carrying control wheels or levers, fixed in an adjacent position to the board. The development of the circular and radial arm types of dimmers, with reduction in size, has made it

possible for all the gear, including switches, fuses, dimmers, etc., to be carried on the same framework, thus producing a combined switchboard and dimmer bank.

Combined boards of this description can now be built to control as many as 100 circuits, without exceeding the practical working limits of board length, thus enabling an operator to reach switches at opposite ends of the board without taking more than two steps. If the switches and dimmers are spaced at four-inch centres, and are arranged in three banks one above the other, the dimmers directly in line with, and below, their respective switches, and allowance is made for the master and grand master control gear to occupy about two feet in the centre of the board, the total length of the board will be about thirteen feet. Such a board will be ample for the requirements of a large theatre, and will be capable of operation normally by one man, and not more than two will be needed for complicated lighting plots. With large installations, two separate switchboards are better than one very large one.

Many different mechanical systems have been devised to operate and control the movement of the dimmer contact over the studs connected to the dimmer windings. In essentials, however, a standard method, varying in details of design by the different manufacturers, has been arrived at. The dimmer is generally mounted behind the board with a pivoted rod directly attached to the contact arm in the case of a radial arm dimmer, or to a rack and pinion gear if the dimmer is of the round-plate pattern. This rod is brought to the front of the board and connected to a lever or a wheel carried on shafting, either directly coupled or connected through tripping gear, which frees the rod at the ends or at intermediate positions of dimmer travel, and picks it up again in the reverse direction. A locking device, also provided, allows each dimmer mechanism to be operated independently, or ganged together in groups, for combined operation through the shafting.

## BANQUETS

By A. E. PETERSON

*Founder, Sunday Night Adventurers; Secretary, Kingston Marionette Players, etc.*

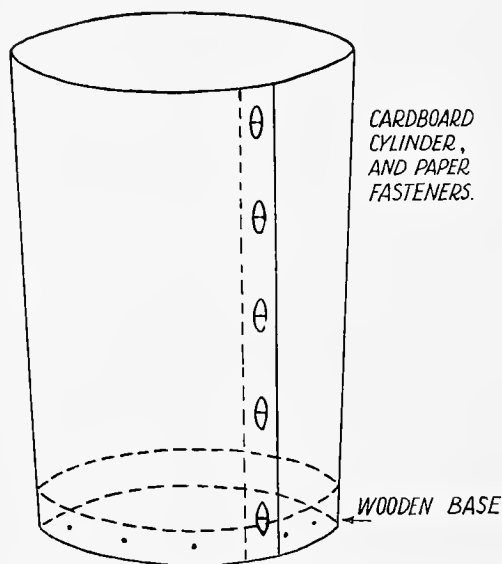
THE stage banquet of old was a function of much ostentation and little real satisfaction. Spectacular feasts were always welcome, and in an old playbill of the production of *Macbeth* in 1824 the two items in the bill that received the honour of large type were "In Act the Second, a Witches Dance" and "In Act the Fourth, A Grand Banquet." In those days the stage banquet was a function at which wine was consumed to the exclusion of all other things. The staging of a banquet was looked forward to because it offered an opportunity to an army of unpaid amateurs who, if the costumes provided would fit them, were allowed to "strut and fret their hour upon the stage" and disappear until the next presentation. Rehearsals were scratch affairs and with a different play each evening of the week the revellers were allowed much latitude and took advantage of it. Some of these budding Thespians had a repertoire of gesture and dialogue that was only limited by the time at their disposal. Loud laughter, a swaggering gait, coarse jests, the familiar pat on the shoulder, and the frequent hiccup were items upon which many changes were rung. The climax came when, as drunk as he was, he carefully arranged his sword so that it should not be accidentally broken as he rolled under the table, where he laid to the great relief of the stock company, on whom the success of the play depended, and the intense regret of a sophisticated audience quick to grasp and appreciate unexpected developments of plot.

Drinking goblets made of cardboard nailed to a thick wooden base were useful articles with which to beat time to a drinking song, and the singer, after having his beaker filled to the brim, never had any hesitation, in the excitement of recalling the charms of his loved one or the gallantries of his prince, in throwing his arms about, forgetful of his wine, but when the moment arrived when the rousing toast was drunk he drank as deep as anyone, and a loud smack of the lips, followed by a courtly gesture as he wiped

the drops of wine from his mouth and beard, testified to the quality of the goods supplied by mine host.

With the passing of Opera Bouffé, the drinking of imaginary wine was followed by plays where one saw dinners consisting of numerous courses of *papier-maché* fowls, sirloins of beef, or haunches of venison, and the illusion was perfect when one saw a piece of venison transferred from the dish to a plate and actually eaten, the audience never guessing that the meat was simply slices of brown bread that had been carefully stacked behind the *papier-maché* property joint. Then came the time when real meals were served on the stage and it is on record that the husband of the great Mrs. Siddons sent in "from the pub next door" a real roast fowl, potatoes, and beer, and the play had almost run its course before the meal was finished. The famous J. L. Toole in his reminiscences describes an incident that occurred during the performance of *The Christmas Carol* at the old Adelphi. He was playing the part of Bob Cratchit, and for forty nights he had had to carve a real roast goose and a real plum pudding that were provided by Mr. Webster, the manager. The meal was served steaming hot to the seven little hungry Cratchits, including, of course, Tiny Tim. The children had enormous appetites, and cleared "the board" each night. Tiny Tim's appetite appalled Toole, who was haunted by the thin, wan, pitiable face of the child acting the part, and, in consequence, he used to pile her plate every evening more generously than anyone else until at last she was receiving nearly half the goose besides a generous helping of potatoes and apple sauce. During the course of the scene she took her plate to the corner of the fireplace where she quickly disposed of her "wittles." The rapidity with which the meal disappeared amazed Toole, and eventually he and Mrs. Alfred Mellon, who was acting the part of Mrs. Cratchit, decided to watch the child. They saw her take her accustomed seat near the fire and after a while noticed

the plate and its contents vanish into the interior of the fireplace, to reappear almost instantly scraped clean. It was afterwards discovered that Tiny Tim was one of an enormous family belonging to an old scene shifter, and that this single helping provided a half-starved family with a hearty supper every night. Dickens when he was



told of it was much interested and smiled sadly as he said to Toole, "You ought to have given her the whole goose."

Food taken on the stage must be of a soft nature and easily eaten. The stage idiot stuffing his mouth full of bread from a loaf that has had almost the whole of its inside scooped away, is, after the first bite, busy removing the bread from his mouth and replacing it in the interior of the hollow loaf. Fancy buns and cakes may have the centre removed in order to be easily eaten, and one can obtain from makers of conjurers' apparatus a stack of buns that can be eaten in view of the audience, the only difficulty being in disposing of the empty cases after the air inside them has been released.

Sandwiches or bread and butter may be the real thing, but the bread and butter should be cut into very small, thin pieces. Ice cream wafers are useful, and can be made to suggest many things, whilst a meal for four persons can be supplied by a single banana eaten to the accom-

paniment of noisy "business" with the knife and fork.

Cold tea can be diluted with water until almost any shade of colour is obtained, and is used to suggest whisky, sherry, and many other drinks. If it is necessary to consume champagne on the stage a bottle of cheap cider can be used, the cork and neck of the bottle being covered with gold-coloured tinfoil. The pop of the cork as it is drawn may be made by bursting a paper bag, both actions being carefully synchronized. Port and similar wines are made by colouring water with cochineal.

When the ceremony of making tea on the stage takes place, much play is made of setting the kettle on the fire, and when the time arrives to pour the boiling water in the teapot a stage hand removes the first kettle and passes through the fireplace a second kettle of the same make that has been kept boiling on a convenient gas ring.

Toast is made in similar manner, and the freshly cut slice of bread is placed on a toasting fork long enough to allow the stage hand, without being seen by the audience, to substitute a slice of well browned toast.

The steam from a pan or kettle that is supposed to be boiling is made by placing in the vessel three or four lumps of lime and covering them with real boiling water. To ensure that the steam is ready when required it is wise to experiment beforehand, keeping a record of the weight of the lime, the volume of water used, and the time it takes "to work."

Wills, old love letters, and other important documents can be burned by placing them well inside the fire and lighting them from a taper or candle held by someone out of sight of the audience.

A perfect stage meal is that served during the progress of Thornton Wilder's one-act play *The Long Christmas Dinner*. The play is included in *The Long Christmas Dinner and Other Plays*, published by Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co. Here are the stage directions.

#### THE LONG CHRISTMAS DINNER

(The dining room of the Bayard home. Close to the footlights a long dining table is handsomely spread for Christmas dinner. The carver's place with a great turkey before it is at the spectators' right. A door, left back, leads into the hall.



At the extreme left, by the proscenium pillar, is a strange portal, trimmed with garlands of fruits and flowers. Directly opposite is another edged and hung with black velvet. The portals denote birth and death.

Ninety years are to be traversed in this play, which represents in accelerated motion ninety Christmas dinners in the Bayard household. The actors are dressed in inconspicuous clothes, and must indicate their gradual increase of years through their acting. Most of them carry wigs of white hair, which they adjust on their heads at the indicated moment, simply and without comment. The ladies may have shawls concealed beneath the table that they gradually draw up about their shoulders as they grow older.

Throughout the play the characters continue eating imaginary food with imaginary knives and forks.

There is no curtain. The audience arriving at the theatre sees the stage set and the table laid, though still in partial darkness. Gradually the lights in the auditorium become dim, and the stage brightens until sparkling winter sunlight streams through the dining room windows.

Enter Lucia. She inspects the table, touching here a knife and there a fork. She talks to a servant girl, who is invisible.)

The play begins, and soon Roderick (extending an imaginary fork) . . . asks Mother Bayard . . . "Come now, What'll you have mother? A little sliver of white?" She accepts. This phrase is repeated in slightly different form by various characters during the play. Very soon there enters Cousin Brandon (rubbing his hands). "Well, well, I smell turkey," and in a moment he is busy with his stuffing and cranberry sauce. The characters gallantly toast each other in imaginary wine and the play ends as—

Ermengarde, left alone, eats slowly and talks to Mary.

Then—

She props a book up before her, still dipping a spoon into the custard from time to time.

She grows from very old to immensely old.

She sighs. The book falls down. She finds a cane beside her, and soon totters into the dark portal, murmuring "Dear little Roderick and little Lucia."

The pleasant fancy of regarding a play as a banquet is a very old one and many witty lines on the subject have been written. Here is the Prologue from Fletcher's tragi-comedy *A Wife for a Month*.

You're welcome, gentlemen, and would our feast  
Were so well season'd, to please every guest;  
Ingenuous appetites, I hope we shall,  
And their examples may prevail in all.  
Our noble friend, who writ this, bid me say,  
He'd rather dress, upon a triumph-day,

My Lord Mayor's feast, and make him sauces,  
Sauce for each sev'ral mouth, may further go,  
He'd rather build up those invincible pies  
And castle custards that affright all eyes,  
Nay eat them all and their artillery,  
Than dress for such a curious company.  
One single dish; Yet he has pleas'd ye too,  
And you've confess'd he knew well what to do;  
Be hungry as you were wont to be, and bring  
Sharp stomachs to the stories he shall sing,  
And he dare yet, he says, prepare a table  
Shall make you say, Well drest, and he well able.

Farquhar's play *The Inconstant* is frankly admitted to have been built on Fletcher's play *The Wild Goose Chase*, and it is not too much to assume that the prologue to *The Inconstant* may have been suggested to Farquhar by the above lines when he wrote the following—

#### PROLOGUE

Like hungry guests, a sitting audience looks;  
Plays are like suppers; poets are the cooks.  
The founders you; the table is this place;  
The carvers we; the prologue is the grace.  
Each act, a course; each scene a different dish;  
Tho we're in Lent, I doubt you're still for flesh.  
Satire's the sauce, high season'd, sharp and rough;  
Kind masks and beaux, I hope you're pepper-proof.  
Wit is the wine; but 'tis so scare the true,  
Poets, like vintners, balderdash and brew.  
Your surly scenes, where rant and bloodshed join,  
Are butcher's meat, a battle's a sirloin;  
Your scenes of love, so flowing, soft and chaste,  
Are water gruel, without salt or taste.  
Bawdy's fat venison, which, tho' stale, can please;  
Your rakes love HAUT-GOUTS, like your damn'd French  
cheese.

Your rarity for the fair guest to gape on,  
Is your nice squeaker, or Italian capon;  
Or your French virgin-pullet, garnish'd round,  
And dress'd with sauce of some—four hundred pound.  
An opera, like an oglio, nicks the age;  
Farce is the hasty-pudding of the stage.  
For when you're treated with indifferent cheer,  
You can dispense with slender stage-coach fare.  
A pastoral's whipt cream; stage whims, mere trash;  
And tragi-comedy, half fish and flesh.  
But comedy, that, that's the darling cheer;  
This night we hope you'll all inconstant bear;  
Wild-fowl is lik'd in play-house all the year.

Yet since each mind betrays a diff'rent taste,  
And every dish scarce pleases ev'ry guest,  
If ought you relish, do not damn the rest.  
This favour crav'd, up let the music strike;  
You're welcome all—now fall to, where you like.

Colley Cibber's play *Love Makes a Man*, or *The Fop's Fortune* is also graced with a prologue written in a similar strain. The story of the old

actor, who, after acting the part of host at an elaborate stage banquet, was discovered by friends cooking his wig was current at this period, and the incident throws a vivid light on the conditions that obtained on the stage in those days.

Modern writers still find the stage meal or banquet a useful asset. Pinero, in *Trelawney of the Wells*, devotes the whole of the first act of the play to a dinner in honour of Rose Trelawney, who is leaving "the profession" to marry and become "a well-to-do fashionable lady." Immediately the play starts Mrs. Mossop and Ablett begin to lay the table and soon there is a gallant array, consisting of "a joint, a chicken, a tongue, a ham, a pigeon pie, etc.," and the festivities open. The second act of the play is "a spacious drawing room" and the time is "that dreadful half hour after dinner every, every evening," whilst in the third act the change of an engagement causes one of the characters to have visions of "Steak for dinner." Pinero uses a similar technique in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. When the play opens "A circular table is laid for a dinner for four persons, which has now reached the stage of dessert and coffee. The fire is burning brightly." In the second act there is a "fire burning in the grate, and a small table is tastefully laid for breakfast. Aubrey and Paula are seated at breakfast and Aubrey is silently reading his letters. Two servants, a man and a woman, hand dishes and then retire." When the third act opens Lady

Orreyed and Paula are discovered. They are "Both in sumptuous dinner gowns," and we have not long to wait until "a servant enters with coffee." This *penchant* for dining may have been remembered by Hare, who, on the occasion of a public dinner, used the opportunity to compare Pinero with Ibsen by saying, "Better a wine-glass of Pinero than a tumblerful of Ibsen."

The last play presented at the Imperial Alexandrine Theatre at St. Petersburg under the old regime was staged in the days that immediately preceded the revolution of 1917, and was Lermantov's *The Masquerade*. It was mounted with lavish extravagance and with all the magnificence, pomp, and splendour that had always been associated with productions of the State Theatre. After the revolution a lean time for the theatre set in, and stage productions were arranged with a minimum of display. Recently, however, there has been a revival of the old manner of stage decoration, and in this connexion it is interesting to note that one of the plays produced was Byron's *Sardanapalus*. This play was staged with much magnificence, and the banquet scene was particularly fine. The play was not staged as an example of a fine play, but was used for propaganda purposes. It showed a decadent and dissolute emperor careless of his people's welfare in an orgy of drunken dissipation and wastefulness. One can imagine the effect of this on an audience, many members of which were still illiterate.

# MAKE-UP FOR PRINCIPALS AND CHORUS

By DUMAYNE WARNE

*Author (with Phil Forsyth) of "The House," "The Ultimate Revue," "Second Thoughts, etc."*

IT has been observed that one of the first things for a new society to decide is its policy as to whether certain phases of its productions should be undertaken by its members, that is to say by amateurs; or whether they should be entrusted only to professionals, and paid for. Among the factors that must be taken into consideration in arriving at a decision, are the available talent and the cost; and the proper order in which they should be considered depends entirely on the society. There are some societies that believe that a production is impossible unless it is professional, and that their members, in a professional setting, will be nearly, if not quite, up to professional standards. Others feel that the slight originality which is rendered possible by home-made settings, etc., is sufficiently acceptable to audiences to enable them to enjoy such productions as much as, or more than, those that are more stereotyped.

Whichever way the matter is regarded, the fact remains that there are amateur playwrights, composers, producers, scene-painters, costumiers, etc., and many societies are grateful to avail themselves of their services. When we reach the last thing to be considered before the dress rehearsal, namely, make-up, the fact still applies. Some amateur actors can make themselves up very well, and there are people who are prepared to give their services, as makers-up, to societies. But, except in a few cases, this is one of the things that committees are least inclined to entrust to members of the company.

This is all the more extraordinary when one remembers that making-up is just as much part of the technique and accomplishment of the competent actor, amateur or professional, as is efficient diction. Yet an amateur, who would be most insulted if his ability at singing or dancing were questioned, is quite unashamed to admit that he knows nothing about make-up. Perhaps some

amateurs feel that it is beneath their dignity, and others that it is a dark mystery into which only the abnormal may probe.

Both groups are wrong. Make-up is a branch of stagecraft that everyone who is worth his salt, and who seeks to be a competent and well equipped craftsman, should master, in the same way as he does his lines and his music.

Apart from the altruistic aspect, there is the financial side of the situation to be considered. A good professional perruquier cannot be secured for much less than a guinea a night; sometimes he asks for more. During a run of a week, with a *matinée*, ten pounds can be spent on him alone. For a big society that hands over hundreds of pounds to charity each year, this is trivial—simply an item of production expenditure for which allowance must be made. But for the small society that performs for two nights, with a dress rehearsal, in a local hall, with a turnover on the entire production of little more than £100 (most people would be amazed if they were informed of the number of such societies), three guineas for a perruquier is an appreciable percentage of the total. They might possibly secure the services of an amateur, in which case they would be lucky, as the number of competent ones is limited, and they are, of course, in great demand.

But how much better, in any case, that the company should be able to make themselves up properly, than that they should be obliged to rely on the kindness of a voluntary worker, or that their societies should be obliged to bear the expense of engaging a professional.

My many professional perruquier friends will, I hope, not bear me any malice when I preach this doctrine, but, as I have often said before, both in public and in print, I believe the amateur stage should be amateur throughout and that appearing and receiving applause is only a tiny part of

the duties of the real and competent amateur actor.

It is true that there are a great number of objections to allowing members of an amateur company to make-up, but the difficulties should be examined with a view to discovering if they cannot be overcome, thus helping societies that wish to be self-supporting, in this respect, to carry out their ideals.

#### DIFFICULTIES

The first difficulty is that most amateurs do not know how to make themselves up, and this is subdivided into two others, namely, that some people have no wish to make themselves up and so they will not bother to learn, and that others do not know where they can learn, even if they are willing to be taught.

With regard to the first of these groups, there is little to be said. For them a perruquier, either amateur or professional, must be found. Another member of the company who is competent and who has time to spare may be suggested. In time, it should be possible for a society to drop members who will not bother to learn how to make themselves up. (The hopelessly inept must be tolerated if they are otherwise valuable, but there are not many of these.) This disinterested attitude is temporary, and the few who cannot make themselves up, among a company of those who can, soon feel thoroughly ashamed of their incompetence, when they are obliged to go round from dressing-room to dressing-room seeking a friend who has leisure to make them up.

To deal with the second group is much more intricate, and its discussion is deferred.

Since we are concerned with musical productions, in which there is usually a chorus, the first difficulty to be overcome is that of ensuring that their make-ups shall all be in the same scale, as it were. When a professional perruquier is employed, it is simple, as he (or she) uses the same colours on each. But when they make themselves up, troubles, especially among the girls, begin at once. Almost all ladies realize that certain colourings suit their personalities and their appearance better than others, and, quite properly, in their private lives they take advantage of this fact to make themselves look as attractive as possible. The divergence of the colours they use, although

hardly noticeable in everyday life, is much exaggerated by the glare of the artificial lights, especially as the make-up itself is required to be so much stronger for stage purposes.

Unless steps are taken to prevent it, this means that sixteen girls in a chorus-troupe are quite capable of appearing on the stage in slightly different shades of make-up, which may vary between a deep sunburn colour and pale mauve. Although separately each would probably look extremely attractive, taken together under a strong artificial light, the effect would be most peculiar.

The cure is to give instructions beforehand to the chorus as to what colour the girls may use, and for the producer (or the stage-manager) to have authority, and the strength to use it, to order any offenders to make-up again if they appear at the inspection, which should take place each night before the rise of the curtain, in anything too markedly different from the others.

This *is* a difficulty, because however strict the supervision, ladies *will* make-up to suit what they consider best for their own complexions. But, provided that the actress is adroit, it is an advantage that she should be aware of the way in which she may best enhance her own attractions; the point is that she must do it in such a manner as to make it fit in with the rest of the scheme of make-up.

It must be remembered that the members of a professional chorus always make themselves up, and there is no reason why amateurs should not also learn to do so, especially when probably every member of it is a comparative expert in dry make-up in everyday life; grease make-ups are, after all, comparable with dry ones.

This difficulty only applies in cases where the chorus appear as a troupe. It does not arise when the chorus are required to appear all different, as in crowd scenes, although there may be reluctance on the part of some of the ladies to make themselves sufficiently repulsive in such scenes as Act I of *The Vagabond King*. This situation should also receive firm treatment.

#### TRADITIONAL MAKE-UPS

The foregoing remarks apply more especially to the chorus. The next difficulty occurs more often among the principals, although it sometimes affects the chorus. When the play is old and well-known,

certain of the characters will have achieved the distinction of becoming like real people, who have an appearance and a personality that may not be changed. This sometimes occurs when a part has been created by an actor of outstanding personality who has made the character into himself. It is then necessary to reproduce the actor. The audience, in fact, know the character by sight, and for it to appear in a make-up that differed materially from the accepted or traditional would be like asking them to meet an old friend whose appearance had changed completely.

The professional perruquiers who make-up amateur companies know by heart all these characters and their proper appearance. Many of them, especially those whose families have been connected with the theatrical profession for generations, always have known them, from constant familiarity, so to speak. The amateur who is obliged to make himself up for one of these parts is in a difficulty unless he has had experience of it before. There are various methods, however, by means of which he can acquire information as to the correct make-up.

One method is to ask the producer, who is practically certain to know. Another is to acquire a copy of the issue of *Play Pictorial* that dealt with the original production, and to copy the make-up. A third is to discover and borrow, if possible, any photographs or drawings or any other particulars of the piece, and having obtained all the information that can be secured, the actor (or actress) should practise the make-up at home beforehand. Make-up should be rehearsed so that at the dress-rehearsal there is no rush to reach the stage because it has taken longer than was expected to secure the required effect.

#### ORIGINAL WORKS

In original works, where the actor is obliged to create the character, he will, of course, invent a make-up to suit the personality of the being that he has evolved in his mind. In this case he is by far the best person to apply the make-up, as no-one else knows how it should appear. The fact that the author or the producer may have definite ideas that they will communicate by means of drawings or demonstrations must not be overlooked.

At this point it is necessary to revert to the difficulty that arises out of the fact that members

of amateur companies do not require suggestions as to copying traditional make-ups, but instruction in the elements of the art. The cost of tuition from an expert for each member of the company would be prohibitive. What then is to be done?

Firstly, books and articles on make-up may be bought, or borrowed, and read.

Secondly, lectures that the whole company can attend may be given. This is probably the better method, for not only do most people learn much more quickly from lectures (with demonstrations) than they do from books, but the cost of engaging a qualified instructor can be subdivided among a large number of members, instead of it being beyond the reach of the few who think of it.

#### CRITICISM

The usual criticism will be levelled at this scheme, that make-up is an art which is given to few. This is readily admitted, but although every person who appears on the amateur stage is not an artist, any amateur of average intelligence is capable of learning to put on a straight make-up in a short time, and with little trouble.

A short course of lectures is outlined below for the benefit of a committee who are anxious that the members of their society should learn to make themselves up.

The cost would depend on how deeply into the subject it is desired to go, but from the point of view of the chorus, it may be mentioned that it is not necessary to go very far. Further lectures could be held for the enthusiastic and promising, and they could pass on their knowledge either at leisure or in case of emergency.

The best way to secure a suitable lecturer is to apply to the National and Operatic Association or to the British Drama League, or to one of the well-known firms of wig-makers. When a candidate is suggested, his qualifications should be examined from the point of view of his ability to teach. His fee will, of course, vary according to the distinction he has acquired in his profession, but one could not expect to secure a competent person for less than a guinea for an hour's lecture. The amount, subdivided among all those attending, should be quite small per head if the number is reasonably large.

The amount of information to be imparted at

each lecture would depend on the length of it and the number to be given, but a great deal can be done in as few as three lessons, if time is not wasted and a plan such as the following is adopted.

### *Lecture I*

Demonstration of articles in use; grease-paints, liners, crepe-hair, spirit-gum, etc.

Demonstration of straight make-up (juvenile) on a lady.

While the lecturer is making-up one member of the company, another will sit opposite and will carry out on her own face, unaided, the operations that the lecturer is performing on her colleague.

Comparison of results and correction.

Demonstration of method of removing make-up.

### *Lecture II*

Test of a volunteer to make herself up, in front of the class.

Correction and comments.

Demonstration of straight juvenile make-up on a man.

Demonstration to be copied by another member as above.

Comparison and correction.

Removal of make-up.

### *Lecture III*

Test of two volunteers, male and female.

Correction and comments.

Demonstration, on his own face, of the way in

which grease-paint is used to convey increasing age.

All that can be shown here is the bare principle. Those who have aptitude will practise and progress, or perhaps attend further lectures. The others will require many lectures before they can make headway, and will get on best by inquiring of their colleagues.

It will be found that books on make-up become much more valuable after a short series of lectures, such as that outlined, has been attended. It is much easier to follow written instructions when one is familiar with the materials, and the manner of manipulating them, than when one is not.

With regard to members providing themselves with the necessary equipment, it should be said that, reduced to a minimum, little is required to effect a straight make-up. The temptation, on beginning to learn, is to buy a japanned box in three tiers, containing everything that can possibly be required. But this is quite unnecessary and in certain cases definitely undesirable (apart from the cost). The box is heavy and takes up a lot of space in the bag, whereas the essentials, wrapped in a towel, are light and occupy but little space.

The best procedure is to buy at first only the things that will actually be used—grease, grease-paints, liners (probably only about two sticks of each are absolutely indispensable) powder, puff, etc. These will cost little. As time goes on fresh materials can be acquired as they are wanted at a trifling cost, and after a short period it will be found that, unnoticed, an efficient but not unwieldy make-up outfit has been gathered together.

## THE LIGHT COMEDY LEADS—II

By D. GRAHAM DAVIS

Editor of "The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal"

BEFORE beginning our study of the more serious masculine G. & S. characters, it would be as well for us to return to the consideration of the light comedy leads. For with these complicated parts behind one, the student of the production of the operas will have crossed the most treacherous part of the difficult road to full technical knowledge of the Savoy characters. Let us, therefore, proceed to look at the characters in this group which followed the Lord Chancellor in *Iolanthe*.

KING GAMA (*Princess Ida*), although always associated with the players of the light comedy lead, does not in many ways sit easily in this group, and is most effective if played on the lines of a strictly high-comedy or dramatic character part. The man to be portrayed is a misshapen, malignant spit-fire, who is never happier than when he is making rude remarks about, or even to, other people. Judged solely by its length, this is not a big part (Gama is absent from the stage throughout the second act), but any deficiencies in that respect are, surely, more than compensated for by the effectiveness of the role. While Gama is on the stage he holds it and dominates the scene—so long as the actor does not attempt to stress the humours of the part.

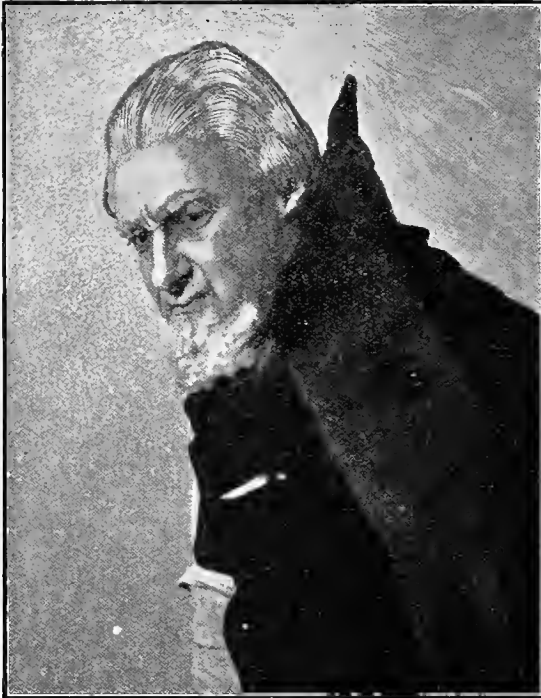
Two of Gama's most effective speeches can lose all their dramatic power if that last warning is not remembered. He gives his definition of a snob, following this up with a recital of his daughter's many virtues. This is worked up to a dramatic climax with the words "Oh, no, King Hildebrand, I am no snob!" A laugh at this point is intended, and will always be obtained. But the true effect of this laugh does not depend on the manner in which the speech has been said. What convulses the audience is the way in which Gama has made his point to the discomfort of Hildebrand and the court. The dramatic intensity that Sir Henry Lytton brings to this speech thrills one; but a moment later the thrill is turned to spontaneous laughter. When Gama is brought

in, a captive, in the last act, he speaks of the way in which his life has been made a misery. The joke, if such it can be called, lies not in how he says this, but in the fact that the tyrant captor has left his prisoner with nothing to grumble at. But to Gama this has indeed had the effect of making his life a curse, and the full force of this conviction is given by the actor implying that his treatment has been in the nature of deadly torture. Even a decided touch of pathos will not come amiss. Taken on these lines, the ensuing remark of Princess Ida, "My tortured father!" will sound all the more convincing, while the audience will duly laugh, as to them this will sound a curious sort of torture indeed.

Ko-Ko (*The Mikado*), an engaging little upstart, is another of Gilbert's delicious humbugs. This part, like that of John Wellington Wells in *The Sorcerer*, is given a little latitude, and provided the actor can be relied upon not to be carried away by himself, a certain amount of low-comedy—but not "music-hallism"—is permissible. At the same time, nothing is lost, and the part still remains a very telling one, if it be played on the more sedate lines of many of the other light comedy leads. That is, to play Ko-Ko as a harassed, rather fidgety, and self-important little man; sunny when things go well, humorously miserable when they do not.

Ko-Ko is nimble-witted as well as nimble-footed, and never at a loss for a way out of any dilemma. His attitude to the other characters varies. Pooh-Bah he treats as a nuisance almost beneath contempt (an attitude that is reciprocal), but he realizes the importance of keeping in the good books of this all-important individual. The other nobles overwhelm him a little, so he has learned a touching little speech, which he delivers on his first entrance. The impression should then be given that all the remarks following "Gentlemen, I'm much touched by this reception," have been carefully rehearsed, and that Ko-Ko, at any rate, is not uttering them aloud for the first time.

Katisha he regards as a great joke—until he sees that the only way of preventing his elaborate house of cards from tumbling about his ears is to marry her. He is mortally afraid of the Mikado, but feels surer of himself during that monarch's more expansive moments. As Ko-Ko's parcel of lies and deception gets more involved, so does he



KING GAMA

A study by the author for the misshapen, malignant monarch in *Princess Ida*.

become more enraptured with it. There is a tendency to regard the famous "Tit-Willow" song as a comic ditty. This is not so; the humorous effect is gained by the impression that Ko-Ko is giving it all the seriousness of a tender ballad. This whimsical fellow should seem to be singing a plaintive song in a perfectly straightforward manner. Therein lies the humour, to which the words and sentiment of the song lend their aid. But, between the verses, comedy creeps out in sundry little sly glances towards Katisha (which she avoids) in order to see if the song is having its effect. Only in the encore verse should any liberties be taken, vocally or otherwise, and these might well be dispensed with.

Ko-Ko should never be played, as is sometimes done, in the manner of a cockney (or similar) comedian. He may have been a cheap tailor, but that is not to say that members of his craft would speak with any local twang or accent. All that the actor should aim for in the voice is a whimsical, possibly slightly squeaky, voice.

The one vocal "gag" permitted to Ko-Ko (or, for that matter, to any of the characters) has been mentioned. Here it is not out of place to refer to some authorized changes in business. It was Gilbert's intention that, in the encore of the "Little List" song, the "apologetic statesmen" should be indicated by business suggesting contemporary politicians—such as a suggestion of Gladstone's collars, or Lord Randolph Churchill's moustaches. This business has moved with the times, and so we find, at the present time, Sir Austen Chamberlain's monocle and top hat, and Mr. Baldwin's pipe (the clenched fist forming the bowl and the thumb the stem). A suggestion of the Highland fling, following a carefully prepared golf stroke, indicates, of course, Mr. MacDonald. Amateur players of Ko-Ko, then, are perfectly in order in introducing any, or all, of these.

SIR RUTHVEN MURGATROYD (*Ruddigore*) really comprises two distinct characters; the bashful farmer (Robin Oakapple) of the first act, and the curse-ridden baronet of the second. Both these are well-defined types of Victorian melodrama. The humour, once again, lies in the writing of the part rather than with the actor. Therefore comparatively straight portrayals of these two types should be given. Yet they must not be made so distinct as to suggest different people—the same personality remains under two widely different conditions. Ruthven, like the Lord Chancellor in *Iolanthe*, is provided with one incident calling for the best of dramatic acting. It is the speech beginning "For a week I have fulfilled my accursed doom!" and culminating with his collapse on the now dark stage as the ghosts faintly appear. Every word in this speech counts—Gilbert said that the speech, as originally written, ran to several pages—and it must be taken seriously, as the cry of a soul in torment, with no trace of hurrying and with full value given to every syllable. Not for one single fraction of a second must the slightest hint of comedy



be allowed to creep in, for the speech sets the keynote for the eeriness of the ghost scene that follows—a scene certainly far removed from ordinary comic opera. Both author and composer give of their best to aid this scene, and it is their due to receive the backing of the actor in getting the right atmosphere. But as soon as Sir Roderic's solo is over and Ruthven comes from the obscurity of the wings to which he has retreated, then, and then alone, is a return to comedy permitted.

Although the Robin of the first act is convincing in his bashfulness (but only before the fair sex), the wickedness of Sir Ruthven is less so. He has been a wicked baronet for a week, and the impression the audience should receive is that, after so many years of a blameless existence, he is trying hard to fit in with his new surroundings and, to the best of his ability, endeavouring to model himself on his younger brother, of whose villainies the audience have been witnesses. Ruthven has, in short, acquired a veneer of wickedness, but, as yet, it has not had time to become deeper than that.

A most effective touch, which all amateurs seem to miss, is the showing of the change from simple farmer to wicked baronet. Robin has been unmasked, and sings—

As pure and blameless peasant,  
I cannot, I regret,  
Deny a truth unpleasant,  
I am that Baronet!

These lines are sung simply; Robin is stating a simple fact. But there comes a change during the next couplets—

But when completely rated  
Bad Baronet am I,  
That I am what he's stated  
I'll recklessly deny!

When the last line is reached all restraint has been thrown to the winds. The soul and personality of the bad baronet have entered his body, and the acting manner employed until the end of the act is that of Act II. Ruthven leaves the stage before the merry jig that comes in the finale; right at the end he re-enters, shrouded in his cloak and cracking a whip. The villagers and officers rush off in terror, leaving Old Adam appealing to his master, who stands pointing off stage—presumably towards Ruddigore Castle and the life of crime that awaits them there. Some-

times Ruthven is shown in this scene to have changed Robin's fair wig for the more sombre hue of that worn in the second act. Frankly one suggests the omission of this little touch, which is not now used in the professional production. There is really insufficient time for the wig to be properly adjusted, and this is got over by putting



Photo by J. W. Debenham

#### THE TRAGIC JESTER

"A private buffoon is a light-hearted loon" sings Jack Point. But the smile hides a breaking heart.

on a black wig of flowing locks—quite unlike the one that has been worn or that which is used in Act II. Rather, then, let it be supposed that the change in appearance takes place gradually, and let Ruthven finish the first act, physically, as he began it.

At the end of the opera, naturally, there is a return to the manner of the prosperous farmer of the first act. It might be mentioned, incidentally, that the correct pronunciation of the name is "Ruth-ven," and not the more usual "Rith'n."

JACK POINT (*The Yeomen of the Guard*) offers a part that will repay any amount of technical study. In this character are found at least four

different aspects: (1) the jester plying his craft, (2) the man anxious for success and favour, (3) the clumsy, egotistical lover, and (4) the broken-hearted, jilted man. These different sides have a habit of succeeding one another in the twinkling of an eye. In his first scene with Elsie and the Lieutenant, we get the second and third sides of the character mixed up. When Elsie is led away, blindfold, Jack's spirits are at their lowest. Suddenly the Lieutenant asks him for his qualifications as a jester. At once the down-at-heel, unfortunate air is thrown aside, and Jack bubbles over with an exhibition of his craft.

Jack Point, the man, is a tragic part. The comedy, and it is ample, comes from Jack Point, the jester. Therefore the actor must keep his whimsicalities and antics for those moments when Jack is, in fact, playing a part. And therein lies the greatest difficulty in the role, for this play acting has to be suggested more than actually portrayed, or else the part becomes unconvincing, lacking in spontaneity and as near to lifelessness as so vital a part can be. How the happy medium is to be achieved cannot well be described in print. The writing of the part helps very much, and the manner must, and safely can, be left to the intelligence and common sense of the actor, aided, if needs be, by the producer.

THE DUKE OF PLAZO-TORO (*The Gondoliers*) is a grandee with a brain of fertile inventiveness, which he uses for his own advancement. He is an engaging rogue who, clearly, would be as much at home amid court ceremonial as at a suburban dance. For all his drollery, egoism, and looking out for the main chance, there must be shown an air of polish—a quizzical refinement and dignity.

He may be a mountebank, but he is never a cheap-jack. In demeanour there should be an air of elegance—even grace. This is especially necessary in the second act, where one wants the many gestures and posings to set off the ungainliness of the two "kings." There is frequently a tendency to "guy" and exaggerate this second act scene—especially during the gavotte. Taking the cue from later professional exponents of the part, this may be right—up to a point. But the duke must behave, so far as his bearing and movements are concerned, in a graceful and dignified manner.

\* \* \*

Throughout in dealing with the comedy parts I have stressed the necessity for inward or unconscious humour. And if I have given the impression that the manner in which they are played does not call for any humorous acting, the amateur will have learned a useful lesson. But one progresses by degrees in learning. Having tried to instil the truth that these are not comic parts, by insisting on their being played as the reverse, let me go a step further, and amplify that theory by analogy. The actor who assumes one of these parts is in the position of the driver of a car. As one humours a car (no pun is intended) and learns its idiosyncrasies so must one drive these comedy parts. One must attune oneself to them, give them one's sympathy, as it were. In this way the actor will come to think and act like the part he is playing, and so, without effort, will be able to bring to them just that slight humorous touch which must, in actuality, come from the interpreter.

## LIGHTER FORMS OF DANCING

By PHILIP J. S. RICHARDSON

Editor, "The Dancing Times"

DANCING, being a living Art, is constantly changing. The basic technique remains the same, but the texture and shape of the Art which clothes that technique alters just as frequently as do the fashions of ladies' dresses.

than is the ballet, for though the construction of new ballets may show continual alterations, it is quite possible for the old style (such as *Giselle*) to be revived with great success, whereas the style of ten years ago in musical comedy could never



AN EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF MUSICAL COMEDY WORK

Helen Burnell and chorus in *The House that Jack Built*

*The Stage Photo Co.*

It is extremely sensitive to the dominating idea of the moment. One hundred years ago the wave of romanticism that swept the world and brought forth the novels of Sir Walter Scott and Victor Hugo found its echo in dancing in the romantic ballet *La Sylphide* and the popularity of the waltz. Sixteen years ago the hectic days of the Armistice gave birth to the "ugly" period of the Diaghileff Ballet, an orgy of highly syncopated "tap" work, and the eccentric phase of the foxtrot.

In no way are these changes in "world thought" so irrevocably registered as in that form of dancing which is called "musical comedy." Indeed to some extent it is more progressive in its changes

be renewed, except as a curiosity such as the recent resuscitation of the "Can-can."

I am using the term "musical comedy dancing," I should point out, in a broad sense to include the dancing not only of the chorus and the principals in musical comedy proper but also that type of dancing which is done by troupes in revues and as "turns" in a variety bill or cabaret.

Not many years ago the principal assets of a dancer who aspired to this type of work were a pretty face, a good figure, a well shaped pair of legs, and ability to kick high, do the splits, and execute a *pas de basque*.

To-day the dancer who seeks work in musical comedy must be exceedingly versatile and have had a thorough training. She must have gone through a course of limbering and stretching, and must have a good working knowledge of the technique of classical dancing—up to a certain point. In addition, she must be familiar with syncopated

was also made, particularly when “strong” work was required, on the so-called Central European methods of Mary Wigman and von Laban. The chorus dancing to accompany Sonnie Hale’s famous song, “Dance Little Lady,” in C. B. Cochran’s revue, *This Fear of Grace*, and the work of Helen Burnell and chorus in the song “My



“WALTZES FROM VIENNA”

Photo by Eric Gray.

The chorus in this musical play at the Alhambra were all highly trained ballet dancers

“tap” and “buck” steps and be able to do side, front, and hitch kicks with ease and lightness.

It was probably about the end of 1927 or the beginning of 1928 that the usual rather vapid “ensemble” work by the chorus in musical comedy gave way to something better and more artistic, and the girl who had apparently “wasted” her time learning the classical technique suddenly came into her own.

Albertina Rasch with her famous troupes in the United States set the lead, and the example was soon followed in this country by up-to-date producers. Movements and steps hitherto left for the classical ballet were introduced, and some call

Heart is Saying” from the Jack Hulbert revue, *The House that Jack Built*, were early examples of Central European influence in this country.

On the other hand, work that may be described as almost pure ballet was entrusted to the chorus in that great Alhambra success, *Waltzes from Vienna*, and all the members of that chorus were highly trained classical dancers. They were entrusted with such steps as *entrechat six*, *sissones*, *cabrioles*, and *grands jetés en tournant*. That work, of course, was somewhat exceptional, and would not be required of the dancers in musical comedy as a rule.

A phase of dancing that is exceedingly popular

in musical comedy and revue is that usually known as "troupe" dancing. This is performed by a troupe of girls, usually eight, but sometimes as many as sixteen or twenty in number. In this

straight; when they kicked every foot was raised the same height from the ground; and when they did tap work their beats were clean and clear. It was nothing but a thorough training, constant



AN AMERICAN "ADAGIO" PAIR  
Virginia Haglin and Clayton Kendall



CONTORTIONISM  
Renée Joliffe well known in London pantomime

case all the members of the troupe execute the same steps simultaneously.

Some years ago the "Palace Girls" were a troupe of this character and became world-famous. The secret of their particular success was the way in which the whole company moved as one person. When they turned, they turned together; when they marched in line, the line was absolutely

rehearsal, and a wonderful enthusiasm for their work that brought about this result.

"Tap" work, which is used a great deal to-day, has greatly changed during the past few years. In many ways it is possible that this is one of the oldest forms of dancing, but it comes to us from so many sources and through so many countries that its origin cannot be clearly defined.

In England we go back, at any rate within comparatively recent times, to the clog dancing of Lancashire, in which a wooden sole and heel were used. Later came the "jink" or heel with loose metal plate substituted for the wooden heel. Then followed the long or flap shoe dancing, as done by the famous Dan Leno. But years have passed since the days of the old clog dancing contests in which the lower limbs only came into play, and the judges sat under the stage in order that they might hear the beats. "Buck" dancing, introduced to us from the coloured folk of America, has exercised an immense influence on this type of work.

To-day tap work is frequently known as 'rhythm dancing,' and the development during the past few years has been very great. "Floor walloping," as step work was called in the old days, appealed only to the ear. To-day troupe and solo work of this type must appeal to the eye as well, and it must be full of touches of humour and the unexpected. It must never be too obvious—even the appeal to the ear must not be made by tapping out the obvious beats. It is the "off beat" and the secondary rhythm that must be looked for. And yet, though "Lancashire Clog" and "Buck Dancing" are back numbers, the old steps still form the basis of the new technique.

A solo tap or rhythm dancer can make his steps as complicated as he is able to, but in the case of troupes, in order to preserve a "sense of power" the steps must be much simpler so that they may be done together with mathematical exactitude. For the same reason, better work can be done by a team of eight than by a team of sixteen.

"Acrobatic" dancing is a term that is popularly used to denote all those forms of dancing that are allied to acrobatics. I shall continue to use it, although, strictly speaking, it refers only to dancing in which one performer springs off another one's shoulders. In the popular sense, however, it includes what are technically called by such names as "Eccentric Dancing," "Contortion Dancing," "Tumbling," and "Legmania." This form of dancing seems to go back either to the Arabs or to the Circus. The best performers on the stage all seem to have learned their business in the circus, and the names they use for the various movements are frequently different from

those used by teachers of dancing. An endeavour is being made to straighten out this difference by a few of the leading teachers, in conjunction with some of the principal stage performers.

When this sort of work is presented as a *dancing act* care should be taken that it is made as artistic as possible and that the posturing, contortionism, tumbling, and acrobatics should be harmoniously blended with some beautiful dancing movements.

It was clearly proved when the Children and Young Persons Act was discussed in Committee that there is no danger to the young child learning this type of dancing *provided the teacher knows her business*.

Miss Zelia Raye in her book *Rational Limbering* says: "There should be a controlled freedom in dancing. The old method has always been to get the muscles tightened up like steel, which must naturally hinder all supple movement. Any authority on physical culture knows the value of pliable muscles. The stretching and limbering exercises form the ground work to all acrobatics. Hand stands, cart-wheels, tinsecas, back bends, splits, etc., are within the average dancer's capabilities, and give the thrill of achievement apart from keeping the student in a state of physical fitness."

In the case of acrobatic dancing couples—what the Americans call an "adagio" team—it may be taken as a *sine qua non* that the girl has had a ballet training and is able to do *pointe* work in addition to her acrobatic acquirements. The thorough ballet training assures that whenever her partner lifts her or holds her on high her body, arms, and legs will always fall in a graceful pose. The toe dancing gives finish to her work and increased height.

Methods of practice differ considerably, and no hard and fast rule can be laid down. Some use the ropes and other appliances of the gymnasium, trying out difficult poses with a waist band, which is attached to a rope suspended from the roof, and thus preventing a nasty fall. Others content themselves with thick mats to break any unexpected tumble.

Acrobatic dancing has changed during the last few years. It used to be acrobatics with little dancing, but to-day the team that does not dance as well as "stunt" does not go very far.

# HOW TO TEACH YOUR ACTORS STAGE BUSINESS

By CONSUELO M. DE REYES

*Producer, Little Theatre, Citizen House, Bath, and Everyman Theatre, Hampstead; Lecturer in Drama,  
University College, Exeter*

THE word "business," which is frequently used on the professional stage, may be taken to cover a great part of the movements and gestures, especially those that are essential to the characterization of the individual actor himself. There are some movements on the stage that are absolutely essential since they are demanded by the plot; thus Malvolio must pirouette before Olivia, and the King in *Hamlet* start at the unfolding of the plot by the Player King and Queen. The only choice left to the producer here is to decide how things can be done, and in so doing he will consider not only the capabilities of his individual actor, but also the significance of the whole group.

Again, a producer will desire to vary his stage-picture and grouping, and, consequently, will frequently plan a movement or cross that will result in breaking up old groups and in forming new ones. Or, again, it may be necessary for a certain action demanded by the plot that one of the players should be in a certain place on the stage at a certain moment, and in order to effect this result the producer will plan a movement or piece of business that will take that actor across the stage to the desired position a little earlier in the scene, so that he may be in the right position when required. This may be done by the simple expedient of getting an actor to fetch a cigarette from a table or a match from the mantelpiece, or to pick up and examine a book. All such action should be as natural as possible, and must, above all, be performed in such a way that it does not draw attention from the main action.

Business may be introduced to create atmosphere or to heighten a dramatic effect. Thus, a production of *The Tempest* in the theatre at Munich during 1933 started with the curtain rising on a realistic tempest and waves that were formed by rows of mermaids tossing high

into the air the coloured net that enshrouded them.

In the production of a well-known play the producer seeks by such a method to introduce an arresting quality that will stimulate the attention of his audience, but great care must be taken not to overweight the play on the side of production, with the result that the dramatic theme of the play is obliterated, just as in individual acting the producer must avoid any temptation to "improve" the play by means of business. All unnecessary action must be avoided, and simplicity and repose must be insisted upon. An example of the eloquence of stillness will be recalled by all those who saw Cedric Hardwicke in *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, and the final curtain in which the absolute rigidity of his position was only broken at length by the slow, deliberate action of his fingers as they tore up Elizabeth's letter. Frequently when amateur actors are asked to stand still, they feel awkward. This awkwardness is due to a tendency to stand square-on to the audience with the weight of the body distributed equally on both feet. If anyone approaches them in this position, or if they have to make a sudden movement, they invariably do so with a slight totter. The golden rule for taking up a position on the stage is: Stand with one foot slightly forward, taking the weight on the upstage foot and letting the forward foot bend slightly. Begin to walk by stepping off with a half-pace, after which take full steps; during the half-step the weight is transferred to the forward foot, and the movement forward is made with the rear foot.

If your stage is small you must practise economy of movement, and endeavour to make your stage look as large as possible by making your crosses where necessary on a diagonal line. Merely to move straight across the stage tends to reveal the fact that the stage can be crossed in a few steps.



All meaningless movements must be eradicated. Some players have a curious habit of stepping back at the conclusion of a speech; others of holding out an arm in an elegant position and turning back the wrist; others of nodding the head constantly when the principal actors are speaking. Such mannerisms are apt to become permanent all too

whole body, and in that whole every part must be responsive, both to the action required and to the readjustment of the body that it involves.

"An excellent exercise for loosening the wrists and obtaining arm flexibility is to raise the arms above the head with the backs of the hands to the front, letting the hands fall inwards and then to fling the arms forwards and downwards as loosely as possible, as if shaking water off them."

The art of sitting on the stage also requires considerable practice. Too often the actor stands back square-on to the chair, and then sits down with a bump. Actually the chair should be approached obliquely, the weight should be placed on the foot nearer the chair, and the rate of descent controlled by this while the other foot is brought forward. When the actor has to rise, the importance of having one foot placed



SEMI-PERMANENT SET ON A SMALL STAGE

soon unless they are carefully checked. The hands should be kept still, and the arms allowed to hang loosely. The best rule is for the actor to forget that he has arms, and the best exercise to obtain the right arm position is to march your actors, with their arms hanging loosely, round the stage three or four times, after which they will be found to be in the correct position. The secret of all good movement is flexibility, which entails looseness of the joints, especially the wrist. All movements must be full and complete—thus an arm gesture should be a movement of the whole arm, and not just a stiff gesture from the elbow. Gestures should be in curves, not in sharp angles, and the arm farthest from the audience should be used so that they do not mask the face or cut across it. In any arm gesture, the fingers should convey the desired impression first, and the rest of the arm should follow freely. This is known as the rule of "the extremities leading the gesture." Thus, too, in any leg action the leg must not be thrown out from the knee as if the foot were dead. In short, every gesture must be a gesture of the

slightly forward will be realized, as then he will not have to stoop or to pull his foot forward from beneath the chair.

When the actor is standing, the body should be erect, but the carriage must suggest ease. Avoid both a tendency to slouch and the tendency, so prevalent among anxious amateurs, to stand in a state of muscular tension.

To kneel, the actor should step forward with the foot that is farther from the audience, place the weight on it, and control the descent till the knee of the other leg is on the ground. From this, the rule of all kneeling positions will be observed. It is: kneel on the knee that is nearer the audience, as to do so avoids the ugly line and ungainly effect that is created by reversing the process. If the action demands kneeling on both knees, as in an act of reverence, kneel on one knee first, and then bring the forward leg down beside the other. Always straighten the toe of the kneeling leg, whether kneeling on one knee or both knees, so that the instep rests on the floor.



If the action demands that you should kiss one of the players, kiss him or her without a trace of self-consciousness. I well remember that in my youth we were always taught to place our finger on the exact place where we desired to implant the kiss; then we proceeded to impress the kiss on our own fingers—a process that was bound

away, as pulling has the effect of causing her to lose her balance. It is advisable to practise any stage embrace until complete ease is reached, as any awkwardness (for which an audience is always on the watch) is a glaring fault.

When an actor has to turn, it is advisable for him to turn towards the audience, though



"THE LIAR" (CARLO GOLDONI)

to involve both the kisser and the kissed in the extremes of self-consciousness. Modern art teaches the absurdity of this—the personal relationship must be merged into the play relationship, and the kiss given thoroughly if the situation demands it. If an embrace is to be given by players who are standing, the man should stand close to the woman with his feet close to hers; then he will not be compelled to bend forward from the hips. Stand straight from feet to shoulders, and bend the head but not the body towards her. Hold her firmly with her up-stage arm, and use the other arm as delicately and lightly as possible. Above all, avoid any tendency to pull

occasionally it may be both necessary and better for the movement for him to turn away from the audience. If he is standing centre, listening to speakers on both sides of him, he should turn on his feet and not swing from the hips. The entrances and exits of your players should be watched carefully. Do not let their action appear to start as they enter; actually it should have started several paces in the wings, so that they have got into their stride, both physically and mentally, for several steps before they appear. Any of you who have been privileged to stand in the wings during a professional production will know exactly what I mean. You will have seen

the actors assume their gait and character some moments before their entry on the stage, so that they are already, mentally and physically, in the mood when their cue comes. Again, you will have seen them come off the stage, and retain the character as far as their dressing-room door, where the character—like a garment—can be “dropped.” The first impression made by the entrance of a character on the stage counts for a great deal. The entrance should not be tentative. Again, the producer must always work for a good exit and a good curtain. Any hint of weakness or of inconclusiveness will ruin an otherwise good scene. One of the most helpful plans is to keep back a few words to be spoken by the actor at his actual exit, since if his speech is concluded in the centre of the stage and he then walks to the exit, an artificial and dangerous pause will be created.

If you have to shut a door, shut it as you would in normal life. Do not turn the handle behind your back. If you have to turn a light on by means of a dummy switch, be sure to keep your hand on the switch until the electrician produces the desired effect. If you are required to take a look round a room that you have not seen before, try to look at it as if for the first time and keep your eyes fairly level. I have frequently seen actors who appeared to take an unusual interest in the ceiling.

It is always advisable not to force on any actor an interpretation that he finds difficult or against his nature. It is essential to make the actor feel comfortable in his part, and if any action is alien to the character, or cannot be grasped by him, it is better to leave it out or to secure another player. Gesture cannot be taught merely from without; it must be evolved from the actor's actual consciousness, and it must come within his emotional and intellectual range.

In training your players, give them plenty of eighteenth-century and Shakespearean work. It is by such training that the fullness of gesture can be studied, and that opportunities for “letting oneself go” can be fully experienced. It must, however, be remembered that the style of expression must fit the style of the play. Gesticulation is always out of place in lyrical or meditative passages, and gestures that would be essential in

a comedy by Sheridan would be absurd in a play by Noel Coward.

Gesture should always precede the speech, so that the audience receives a suggestion of the words to be expected. Gestures may be of two kinds, the reflex action of emotion, such as the quickened pulse and breathing, the dilated eye and nostril of fear; and the symbolic, such as the opening of the extended hand in the action of pleading. Great care should be taken to avoid too many symbolic gestures, which are reminiscent of the amateur recitation in which the action is suited to the word.

The actor should act all the time he is on the stage. He must act just as much when he is merely standing and listening as when he is speaking. Often, he may be able to help another actor by an exclamation or a gesture while the other is speaking. If he “drops” his part between his speeches, this will be quite obvious, and he will at once fall out of the picture.

The expression of laughter and grief is an art that must be carefully and continuously rehearsed by the actor until absolute naturalness is achieved. The emotion must be genuinely felt. The following rules of breath control will greatly assist: Begin the laugh by a quick and complete letting out of the breath and let the first sounds accompany an attempt to expel even more. For weeping reverse the process, take in breath, let the voice be shaken by the tremor of the overcharged lungs, produce the first sobs by a convulsive effort to draw in more breath, then release the breath and again draw it in.

Sometimes players are apt to lose all sense of personality by looking down on the ground or into the footlights, whereas they should look and speak straight in front of them. When two actors are speaking to each other, they should look at each other as they would in real life. The nervous practice of avoiding one another's glances should be guarded against, and every actor should sense his audience, feeling its mood and temperament keenly, since it is in proportion to his hold over them that his own art will be great, and, conversely, it is to this magnetic quality of the actor's personality that the audience will respond and in which will lie their enjoyment and understanding of his art.

## ENTERTAINMENT TAX—II

By DUDLEY S. PAGE

*Author of "Law of the Amateur Stage"*

THE regulations that apply to entertainments of a casual or isolated character (Class 1) differ materially from those in Class 2, in that the percentages required are considerably less. But since the expenses of organized productions, particularly operatic, are usually heavy, the concessions are not so generous as they appear, and in many cases are quite beyond attainment.

Class 2 applies only to those entertainments that are promoted by a society or institution of a permanent character, in other words, a society that is properly organized to give periodical entertainments as distinct from casual or isolated efforts. This does not, of course, exclude a newly formed society giving an entertainment for the first time, for such a society may none the less be of a permanent character if intending to give periodical productions. In all such cases as these exemptions will be granted if the *Commissioners are satisfied that the whole of the net proceeds are devoted to philanthropic or charitable purposes.*

It will be seen here that the Act itself does not specify a given percentage as in the cases already considered, but speaks merely of "net proceeds." But if you imagine that a profit, however small, will entitle you to exemption, you will be sadly mistaken, for the Act says that the Commissioners must be "satisfied," and in the cause of uniformity they have been at some pains to formulate their own rules as to what will and what will not satisfy them, and they have declined to be satisfied with anything less than the percentage laid down in those rules.

The standard is based on a percentage of profits handed to charity from the first and succeeding entertainments, but in all cases the amount of the tax itself will be treated as a donation to charity for the purpose of calculating the percentages.

These percentages vary for each of the first seven entertainments, but it will be noted that in respect of the first three of such entertainments, a guarantee has to be given, and the exemption

is only provisional, but having fulfilled the requirements for the first three, the fourth and subsequent entertainments, although still provisional, are not subject to guarantees.

The distinction is of considerable importance, and means just this, that if the guarantee required in the first three entertainments is *not* reached, you lose the tax, but in those cases in which no guarantee is required, the tax would none the less be remitted on that particular entertainment so long as the profits, whatever they may be, are given to charity. But your subsequent entertainments would again be subject to a guarantee until your next three entertainments had once again reached the required percentages.

The following are the requirements relating to the first three entertainments in which a guarantee is required, and the fourth and subsequent entertainments without a guarantee. They should be studied carefully, as they are not quite so simple as they look—

1. If a Society has not already held any entertainments, whether for charity or otherwise, its **FIRST** entertainment will be provisionally exempted from duty if a guarantee is given that the donation to charity will be not less than the amount of the duty remitted.

2. Its **SECOND** entertainment will be provisionally exempted if a guarantee is given that the donations to charity as a result of the two entertainments will be not less than the amount of the duty remitted on the first, plus 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the second.

3. The **THIRD** entertainment will be provisionally exempted if a guarantee is given that the donations to charity as a result of the three entertainments will be not less than the amount of the duty remitted on the first, plus 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the second, plus 25 per cent of the gross receipts from the third.

4. The **FOURTH** entertainment will be exempted if the donations to charity as a result of the three previous entertainments have been not less than the amount of the duty chargeable in respect of the first entertainment, plus 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the second, plus 25 per cent of the gross receipts from the third.

5. The **FIFTH** entertainment will be exempted if either—

(a) the aggregate donations to charity from the three previous entertainments have been not less than 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the second, plus 25 per cent of the gross receipts from the third and fourth; or

(b) the aggregate donations to charity from the four previous entertainments have been not less than the amount of duty chargeable in respect of the first entertainment, plus 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the second, plus 25 per cent of gross receipts from the third and fourth.

6. The **SIXTH** entertainment will be exempted if either—

(a) the aggregate donations to charity from the three previous entertainments have been not less than 25 per cent of the aggregate gross receipts; or

(b) the aggregate donations to charity from the four previous entertainments have been not less than 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the second entertainment, plus 25 per cent of the gross receipts from the third, fourth, and fifth; or

(c) the aggregate donations to charity from the five previous entertainments have been not less than the amount of the duty chargeable in respect of the first entertainment, plus 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the second, plus 25 per cent of the gross receipts from the third, fourth, and fifth.

7. The **SEVENTH** entertainment will be exempted if either—

(a) the aggregate donations to charity from the three or four previous entertainments have been not less than 25 per cent of the aggregate gross receipts; or

(b) the aggregate donations to charity from the five previous entertainments have been not less than 20 per cent of the gross receipts from the second entertainment, plus 25 per cent of the gross receipts from the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth.

8. **SUBSEQUENT** entertainments will be exempted if the aggregate donations to charity from the previous three or four or five entertainments have been not less than 25 per cent of the aggregate gross receipts.

From the foregoing you will be able to see the minimum percentages that will entitle you to exemption, but it must not be supposed that this will limit your contributions to charity if your percentages show something in excess of this minimum, for in that case the whole of your profits, subject to certain permissible deductions, must be handed over to charity. These permissible deductions may be summarized as follows—

1. A reasonable amount carried forward as a working balance to meet preliminary expenses of the next production, provided that the Society has passed a rule that if it is dissolved any balance in hand shall be given to charity.

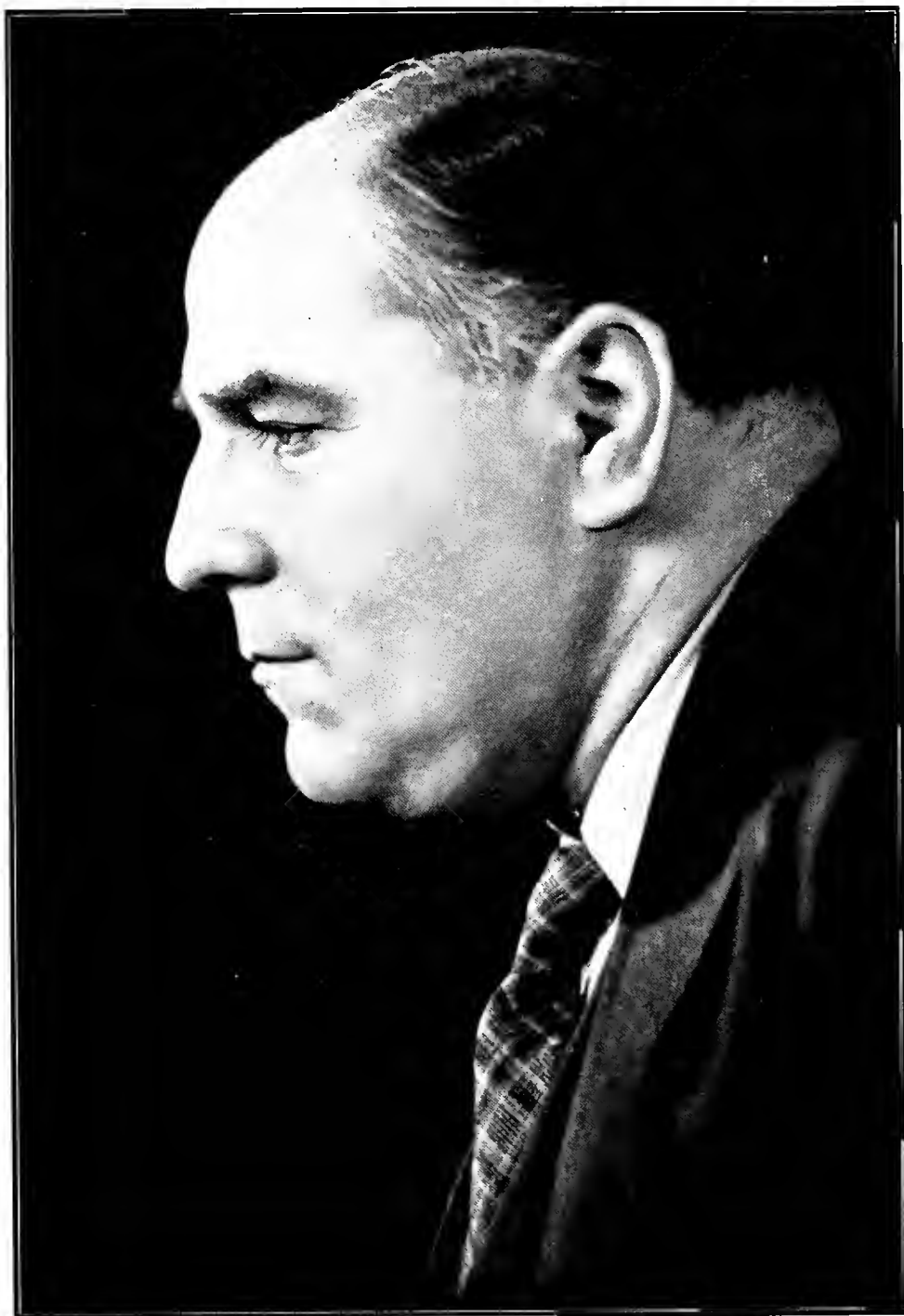
2. The annual subscription to a Central Association to which the Society is affiliated, such as the National Operatic and Dramatic Association, or the British Drama League.

3. Refreshments to the performers at a cost not exceeding One shilling per head of the Company, per performance.

But members' and patrons' subscriptions, or such part of them as confer no right to admission, can be retained by the Society and need not be brought into account at all, since they form no part of the general receipts of the entertainment.

The appropriate form for all applications in this class is Form E.D. 40. Copies can be obtained from any Customs and Excise Office, or from the Secretary's Office, Custom House, London, E.C.3. When completed, it should be forwarded at least 14 clear days before the date of production, to The Commissioners of Customs and Excise, Custom House, London, E.C.3, and not to the local Customs and Excise officials.





*Photo by Pollard Crother*

MR. ROBERT ATKINS

# ACTING IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

By ROBERT ATKINS

IT has often been stated that any actor or actress who wants to be an accomplished delineator of a character in a modern play ought before he or she attempts delineation to have had experience in Shakespearean productions. It is undeniable that actors and actresses in Shakespeare's plays work upon material that can be adequately dealt with from a histrionic and an artistic point of view only by those who can blend the theory and practice of acting. The modern play with its smart dialogue, its snappy lines, perhaps rich in scintillating wit, and certainly reflective of the moods and modes of expression of the moment, calls for a sophistication that is reminiscent of the life that is lived by people who move in certain circles of Society. There is a technique in modern acting just as there is a specialized technique in acting in Shakespeare's plays. It is easy to exaggerate the importance of technique, notwithstanding the fact that it is a most important essential. Without technique there cannot be adequacy of interpretation. Delineation requires understanding of subtleties. Subtlety is the outcome and crystallization of applied theory. Sarah Bernhardt, in her book *The Art of the Theatre*, revealed that she had a clear understanding of the limitations of technical efficiency: "Whatever I have to impart in the way of anguish, passion, or of joy, comes to me during rehearsal in the very action of the play. There is no need to cast about for an attitude, or a cry, or anything else. You must be able to find what you want on the stage in the excitement created by the general collaboration. . . . Everything must come from suggestion." The sources of suggestion are varied. They are in both the company and the audience.

Actors and actresses work in the realm of creative imagination—if they are first-class exponents of the art that they exercise. It requires a genius to be a versatile actor or actress and an expert delineator in many roles. But something more than creation, which I suggest is of primary importance, is necessary. Aptitude for and ability

at imitation are requisites. The player in a modern play may think that imitation is better than creation for the purpose of characterization. The player in a Shakespearean tragedy, or a Restoration comedy, or in Greek drama, cannot go to contemporary life for models. He or she has to create the character imaginatively. The characters must be made to exist in the mind of the interpreter, and their existence must be given verisimilitude of a sort. There is always a danger in attempting to get "near to truth," especially in the theatre: truth to tradition, to convention, to external trappings, or the spirit that is generated within. Many problems can easily be started. Years ago *The Stage* published a leading article on Period Acting. "It was Francisque Sarcey, we think," stated the writer, "who once said that on the stage he liked the natural of art but not the natural of nature. In other words, a play is not just a raw slice of life, and acting is not simply a transfer of speech, movement, and feeling from the street or the room to the stage. If nothing more than that were asked from the actor, then anyone could be an actor. But acting calls for the histrionic gift and for the technical ability to express it. Stage naturalness is not crude nature but the art of seeming to the audience to be natural; and this naturalness has to be, as far as possible, at one and the same time naturalness within the design of the part and naturalness acceptable to the audience. Anyone with any technical knowledge of acting is aware that a piece of acting, whatever its period, shows, if studied from close quarters on the stage, highly accentuated values in much the same way as the facial make-up of the actor is out of perspective from the same angle of vision." Questions that arise out of consideration of period and perspective are important. "The dramatist or the actor" (to quote *The Stage* again), "dealing with a period not his own, can reconstruct more or less from the sources of information open to him. There can be no intimate realization—only this approximate reconstruction. He can show something of

historical spirit, and can keep his work free from obvious anachronisms and solecisms. What he cannot do, however flexible and sympathetic his mind and wide his researches, is wholly to project himself into a period not his own. To some extent he is obliged in an old period play to fall back upon convention whether of manner or speech, or both. Blank verse, for example, is a convention, or rather an artistic and poetic medium of expression. It must be spoken in accordance with its structure and cadence. It can be spoken in this way, and very beautifully and dramatically spoken; and it certainly cannot be spoken—unless for the purpose of trying perversely to undo all that it aims at doing—in the highly colloquial way of our street corner talk. Generally, the acting of the period play, if it cannot altogether obtain from the actor the special vitality that he imparts to his work in a play that belongs to his own day, calls upon him for knowledge, insight, imagination, and for a full technical skill able to range from the nice conduct of a clouded cane to a just and fluent delivery of the mighty line of blank verse."

These pertinent points can easily be made to apply to acting in Shakespeare's plays. Type casting, which is common to-day, is in some cases an obstacle that impedes the development of acting talent. Shakespeare's plays offer less scope for the application of modern methods of both casting and acting, assuming, of course, that the attainment of a high standard of artistic interpretation through presentation is desired. Think of either Shakespearean comedy or tragedy. There is a richness of language that is in striking contrast to the paucity of the dialogue of the average modern play. The exquisite delicacy of language that is one characteristic of Shakespeare's plays must be conveyed in acting by the soundness of interpretative technique, plus the spirit that stimulates imagination and gives point and purpose to the interpretation. We live in an age when the simple, direct, and easily understood are features of written expression. Shakespeare's plays have a richness of language that must be thought

about, analysed, and understood if significance of meaning is to be extracted from them. Shakespearean dialogue is both sound and sense. Neither can be made to serve its true function unless the actor or actress can arrive at understanding by means of the difficult, the indirect, and the complex. There must be elocution, within the best definition of the word, for the voice is the medium of expression. But although skilful use of the appropriate tones is necessary, elocution is not enough. There must be a sense of the rhythm of language, a sense of the freedom that gives harmony to gesture, and movement that is meaningful though modish. There must be technique suffused by idealism. In other words, and to quote Martita Hunt's "'Macbeth' From the Actor's Point of View" (*The Listener*): "For the actor there are two entirely different points of view on every play—his ideal conception, in theory, when he reads the play (we are assuming that he is the kind of actor who does read a play, and not only his own part), and his very different attitude, in practice, when he is faced with the difficulties of carrying out his conception. If these difficulties can be overcome and an ideal conception ideally carried out, the audience should have that great emotional experience which surely only the theatre can give. I do not imply that a great play may not be conceived ideally in many different ways, provided that it is a genuine interpretation of the author and not the exploitation of an actor's personality or a producer's idiosyncrasy. It is very important in a play like 'Macbeth,' where the leading actor carries most of the responsibility of interpretation, that his ideas and the producer's should be the same. Indeed, if a production has not unity of purpose it can never convey to an audience that greater significance, which lies behind the mere action. 'Macbeth' can be considered as nothing more than a very exciting murder play, written by a fine poet and dramatist, but it should create a deeper impression, something which one carries away from the theatre, a quickening of the imagination, a spiritual experience."

*Robert Atkinson*



# PRODUCING SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS—II

By HARCOURT WILLIAMS

NIJINSKY, we are told, held that in drama, music, and the dance the author's idea must be adhered to absolutely; and Arthur Whitby, an actor of rare ability and no little achievement, maintained that an actor's first duty was to know the author's lines accurately: two excellent rocks these to which any production may be anchored.

To give advice on producing Shakespeare is as difficult as it is dangerous, for if one is keen one's ideas are bound to shift and grow; but no harm can be done by going back to the First Folio Edition and studying the play as there set out, before the ideas born of realistic scenery have been imposed upon it and the original flow of the drama has been interrupted by emendations. Then visualize the mechanics of the play as it might have been done on the Globe Stage. It will be found that the stage management slips into the structure, Inner Stage, Outer Stage, and Traverse, fairly simply. Let us take the example of *Romeo and Juliet*, which after the preliminary "*Actus Primus, Scæna Prima*," has no further division of act or scene.

The opening quarrel scenes, Romeo's entrance, Capulet's scene with Paris and Peter, and Romeo and Benvolio's return, could all take place on the Outer Stage. The first Juliet scene, with her Mother and the Nurse, could also be on the Outer Stage with the addition, perhaps, of the Inner Stage. At the end of the scene the Nurse would probably see to it that the curtains were drawn to close the Inner Stage at the end of her scene. The maskers with their drums and torches would then enter, and during Mercutio's poetic foolish fancies, tables would be set in the Inner Stage. At the end of the Mercutio scene the Folio gives the following direction, "They march about the stage, and the serving men come forth with their napkins." This meant that they would pop out from the Inner Stage, whence sounds of merry-making and feasting would probably be heard. The "march about the stage" of the maskers may have meant that they went out through one

door, marched about, that is round the back of the stage, and in at the other door on their cue. After the Potpan scene the curtains would be drawn, and Capulet would lead the way forward with his guests. At the end of the scene it is possible that the traverse was closed for the Chorus to speak his lines, and this would allow an opportunity for clearing such furniture as was used in the preceding scene.

The Balcony scene would be played on the real balcony over the Inner Stage, and I fancy that Romeo's "Can I go forward when my heart is here?" and the little Mercutio and Benvolio scene should be played without any scene change. Undoubtedly, Romeo should not leave the stage as is usual during Mercutio's coarse quips on love, but should hear them, otherwise Romeo's "He jests at scars that never felt a wound" has no meaning.

The Friar's cell scene, which follows, would be placed in the Inner Stage.

The scene that begins "Where the devil should this Romeo be?" and leads through a delicious chatter of idle wit not so far removed from the gayer efforts of bright young things to-day, to the coming of the Nurse and the subsequent plot of the marriage and the scaling of the ladder to the high top gallant of Romeo's joy, could be played in front of the Traverse. Juliet's scene with the Nurse would take place on the Outer Stage and the marriage ceremony on the Inner Stage. This would leave the Outer Stage free for the quarrel between Mercutio and Tybalt that leads to the death of both, the entrance of the Prince, with the animated, quick-tempered Italian populace, and the subsequent banishment of Romeo.

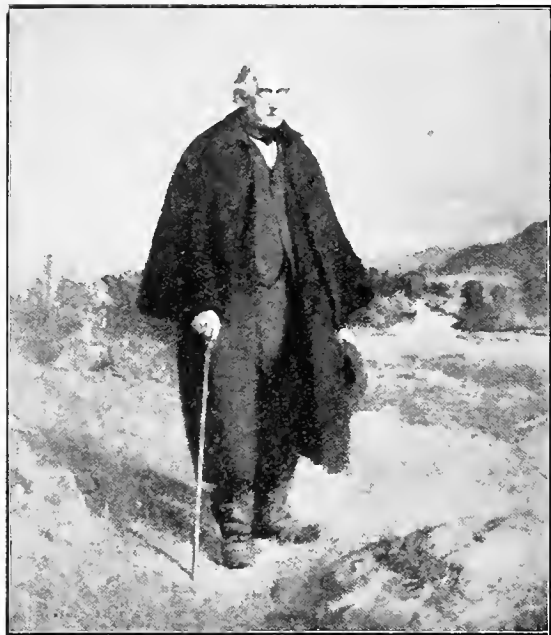
Here, if the modern audience must have a pause, a break can be made. But it is unnecessary, and spoils the swing of the play. There are only three legitimate reasons for intervals in Shakespeare's plays. (1) When a change of mood in the spectator is advisable; occasioned, for instance, by a definite change of place. (2) Physical

fatigue, as when the full version of Hamlet is given. (Those who have seen such a performance can never be satisfied with any truncated hotch-potch.) (3) Rest for the actors. I think this last can almost be eliminated, for Shakespeare shows his usual stagecraft by giving the actors, who are carrying the heaviest burden, a reasonable

and the Nurse could hardly take place in the confined space of the balcony and so far removed from the audience, so one must conjecture that the Mother did not really enter until her line, "Why, how now Juliet?" and that Juliet had time to reach the stage proper after she had spoken, "What unaccustom'd cause procures her hither?"

For the last scene of all, if the convention is accepted that the curtains of the Inner Stage are the heavy portals to the charnel house, all the difficulties that are created by the realistic theatre disappear as though by magic: the magic of imagination indeed! There is no doubt that the playgoer of Elizabeth's day was meant to bring his imagination with him to the theatre, and we gather from the exhortations in the Chorus of Henry V that there was a danger the mental process might not work! On the evidence of the text I think that the use of the "Traverse Curtain" that I have suggested was not used in *Romeo and Juliet*, but it is obvious that the scenes followed each other in rapid succession without any appreciable interruption. There is no doubt that Shakespeare relied upon a swiftness of speech and action whereby to hold his mixed audience, which ranged from a cultured few to a rough but not unintelligent crowd.

The verse should be spoken smoothly and without too much explanation, and the thoughts therein translated in the actor's mind into their modern application. We are too often misled into thinking that because certain words in the plays have fallen into disuse (more's the pity) that the ideas, emotions, and, what we to-day call psychological reactions, are necessarily archaic. Nothing is further from the truth. These are like the Cleopatra of Enobarbus's description, age cannot wither, nor custom stale, their infinite variety; and provided we do not let go the anchor that holds us to the author's conception, we should, I think, let in the flood of modern conditions and reactions to the extent of allowing them to influence our work, just as we should avail ourselves of the convenience of such modern lighting and decorative effect as will help to set off the play without detracting from its dramatic value. But do not let us attempt to "paint" the scenery that the author himself has provided with such consummate skill in the imagination. And



A PORTRAIT, BY PROFESSOR HENRY TONKS,  
OF WILLIAM POEL

Presented to him on the occasion of his 80th birthday  
It is at present in the Tate Gallery

wait in the text before they have their final big scene.

It is scarcely necessary to detail the rest of the changes. The principle is so simple that it is easily applied. There is a slight difficulty in the scene where Romeo says farewell to Juliet. The Folio says, "Enter Romeo and Juliet aloft," which means, of course, on the balcony. This is an admirable place for the scene, and Romeo's descent by his rope ladder becomes a practicable arrangement. But five lines after he has left the stage the Mother enters. The question is: Does she enter "aloft" where Juliet is, or below in what a moment ago we have imagined to be a part of Capulet's orchard? Obviously the succeeding scene between Capulet, Lady Capulet, Juliet,

even the *décor* should not be permitted to distract. Mr. Ivor Brown, writing of a classical production, rejoiced that the tiresome word "stylize" had blessedly been forgotten, and that the performance was not an ambitious producer's attempt to cut capers round about the play.

When choosing players it is not a bad notion

has uttered wise remarks upon this subject: "No one can so quickly rouse my wrath and provoke my contempt as a rule-ridden man, the fool who says 'A rule's a rule; as long as I'm a member of this society, a rule will continue to be a rule!' But to despise a man who thinks that people are made for rules when rules are made for con-



Photo by J. W. Debenham

A SCENE, DESIGNED BY EDWARD CARRICK, FOR A PRODUCTION OF "MACBETH" AT THE OLD VIC THEATRE

to think of an orchestra. The voices and personalities should be well balanced. The actors should be encouraged to create characters; that is to bring colour and background into their interpretations, but the producer should watch for laboured delivery, unnatural voices (the "Shakespearean voice!"), meaningless gesture, or any elaboration that holds up the action for one moment, and, finally, shun "traditional business" like the foul fiend. Tradition should always be considered, for there is much to be learned from it, and the spirit that informed it was more likely to be right than not, but it must not be imitated. It is a grammar, not an exercise. St. John Ervine

venience and have no value or virtue apart from their convenience, is one thing, and to plead for the abolition of all rules is another. It is well for us to cry out at regular intervals against the bondage of technique, but we must be more ready to cry out against the crueller bondage of sloppiness." It is sloppiness that so easily flourishes in the emotional atmosphere of theatrical enterprise, and no man has fought against this more strenuously than William Poel.

There is an austerity about his work that makes for intellectual clarity, and although he became more experimental he never abandoned his original conception of Shakespeare as a consummate

craftsman of the practical theatre. His book *Shakespeare in the Theatre* should be read by all intending producers, together with Harley Granville Barker's two invaluable volumes, *Prefaces to Shakespeare*. Here we are privileged to see the mind of a superb producer illuminating some of the plays with understanding and a perfect grasp of the technical detail.

There are two vexed questions with which I have no space to deal as fully as they deserve to be dealt with: Costume and Music. For the first it is best to keep an eye on the costume of the time as far as possible; this will save us from many a sartorial pitfall laid for the unwary in the text.

The archaeological exactitude on which we are apt to pride ourselves to-day probably troubled the Elizabethans but little. Their familiar doublet and hose appear to have formed the basis of their stage costume, with crowns, cloaks, and armour, added as occasion demanded. Plays of a more masque-like character, intended for nuptial celebrations and so forth, may have called forth a more elaborate "dressing-up," such as is indicated in the designs of Inigo Jones. The touch of modernism (as it then was) in the actor's appearance no doubt helped to preserve a reality in the plays that our period-conscious trappings too often obscure. The lesson of Sir Barry Jackson's presentation of *Hamlet* in the clothes of the twentieth century was sharp and salutary, and for my part I should like to see a play such as *Julius Caesar* produced in a similar manner, jolted out of its cold pseudo-Roman bathtub toggery, and given a new perspective.

Paul Veronese knew how to create the feeling of a classical atmosphere out of his own period and a skilled designer might well achieve satisfactory results on the same principle.

When dealing with the music in Shakespeare's plays, let us remember that the author, from textual evidence alone, must have been a sound musician, and give him what he asks for—as closely as we can—and no more.

Nothing is more distressing than to hear Shakespeare's verse spoken to illustrative music, and the fact that Oberon's exquisite speech beginning "I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows" has to be sung instead of spoken is a strong argument against using Mendelssohn's music in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Another misuse of music in production is the introduction of songs and dances between the dialogue, tending to slow down the tempo of the drama. An example of this occurred in a performance of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Now this, plainly, is an early and experimental work, but it has two essential qualities, extreme passionate youth and swiftness of action. (Whether it is entirely Shakespeare's does not matter at the moment.)

There is a point where Sylvia's father unmasks Valentine's plot to steal his daughter. In a heated speech the Duke banishes Valentine and leaves him alone on the stage to express his reaction to the preceding scene. On the occasion in mind a song was inserted between the Duke's exit and Valentine's emotional soliloquy, thus nullifying the dramatic situation. This brings me back to my original dictum, that the spirit of the play must not be frustrated—a divinity, I add, that must sanctify auditors as well as actors.

There can be no question that among other important things that we have lost in this business of producing Elizabethan plays is the specific attitude of the audience. The darkened auditorium and the picture-stage straining after a naturalistic realism have succeeded in putting a barrier between players and public that is often hard to surmount, and the latest developments of the film theatre have created an audience which, however appreciative they may be in their silence, are completely unresponsive so far as outward expression is concerned. This non-committal attitude, besides retarding the growth of film art itself, is poor training for the living theatre, where a generous interchange of emotion is essential.

Finally, I offer a word of encouragement to the amateur to tackle Shakespeare. Fools rush in, they say, where angels fear to tread. But professional actors are not always angelic, and the non-professional are not always foolish. I have seen more than one dramatic performance of Shakespeare given by children and young people (who did not know too much!) that were admirable. There is a quality in Shakespeare which the initiated are too apt to disregard and which may be brought to light with great profit by the simple of heart.

## YOUR OWN SCENERY

By HAL D. STEWART

*Author of "Rizzio's Boots," "The Blind Eye," etc.*

**M**OST amateur dramatic societies that survive their first adventurous productions and become established on a permanent basis decide to acquire scenery of their own. It

a society. Moreover, the producer, designer, or some other official, will probably incur expenses in going to select the scenery in the first instance. If the matter is arranged only by correspondence



*By kind permission of the Crescent Theatre, Birmingham*

THE CRESCENT THEATRE'S PRODUCTION OF "CAESAR AND CLEOPATRA," BY BERNARD SHAW

is impossible to state dogmatically that this is advisable or that it is not. A great deal depends on the circumstances of the particular organization.

A society in a remote village will probably benefit greatly by having its own scenery made locally. The cost of carriage, added to the hiring charges, makes hired scenery expensive for such

it is unlikely that the scenery that is sent will give satisfaction.

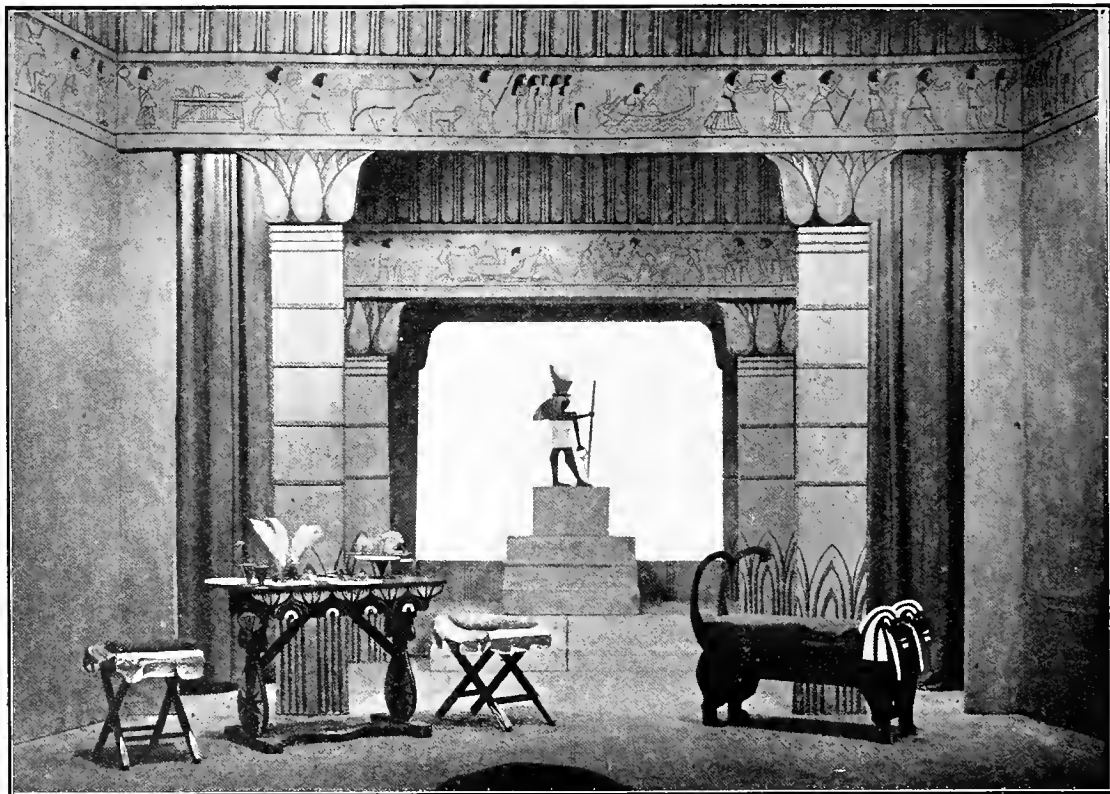
In the country, it is, as a rule, easy to arrange for the use of a shed or barn in which to make scenery, and it is equally easy to arrange to have it stored, free of charge, after it is made. Furthermore, the chances are that a country club has in its ranks handy men who are well qualified to

make a reasonably good job of scenery construction.

A society in a city is rather differently circumstanced. In most large cities there are firms that let amateurs have scenery at reasonable prices. Some of them are prepared to make scenery to requirements, and allow it to be hired still at

accommodation. Suitable accommodation is scarce and rents are high.

These are arguments against home-made scenery as far as a city society is concerned. But although these arguments are sound, and there are more that might be adduced to support them, the fact remains that the society that is so seriously



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reasonable prices. The extra amount charged for making scenery specially will depend to some extent on whether the pieces made are suitable for stock—i.e. whether they are likely to be hired for other productions. Delivery charges within the city boundaries are rarely high, and in these days of motor transport are reasonable for a considerable radius.

The city society that makes its own scenery usually finds that it is confronted with a problem when it starts to look for workshop and storage

interested in the theatre that it develops into a well organized and efficient group, will eventually make its own scenery, whether its headquarters are in Golders Green or Golspie. The societies in more remote parts will probably be forced, for economic reasons, to make their own scenery.

It follows that the amateur actor should learn something about the construction of scenery. It is amazing how few amateurs have any knowledge of this work: how few can explain, say, by what means flats are joined. There are



books that deal with the subject, and if you are interested you should study them. I will give here the normal methods of construction as far as they are applicable to amateur work.

To begin with, you must have a workshop. There would be no practical point in describing the ideal workshop. There is, however, one

white pine. It is cheap and sufficiently strong for all ordinary purposes. For making rostrums, ceiling frames, fit-ups, and anything that has to carry weight or that is subjected to a considerable strain, it is advisable to use a stronger timber. Pitch pine is excellent for this purpose, but is more expensive.



*By kind permission of the Crescent Theatre, Birmingham*

THE CRESCENT THEATRE'S PRODUCTION OF "ARIADNE," BY A. A. MILNE

essential that must not be overlooked. The door must be large enough to get the scenery out when it has been made. This is so obvious that it may appear absurd even to mention it, but it is, nevertheless, a point that is sometimes overlooked.

Next, there is the question of materials. You will need a set of carpenters' tools—hammer, saw, chisel, plane, screwdriver, etc., a foot-rule, and a set-square, a glue-pot and brush, nails and screw nails, timber, canvas, paint, and brushes.

The most suitable timber to use is good quality

Make sure that the timber is dry. Dryness is essential. Flats that are made of green wood will warp, and gaps will show between the flats after the scene is set. This defect can only be eliminated by planing the edge that has twisted until it is straight again. It may involve removing the canvas from the flat, and in any case the process is tedious. Sometimes a flat will become so badly twisted that it will be impossible to straighten it by planing. To attempt to remedy it will make the upright too narrow at some point to carry

the strain to which it will be subjected. This trouble will be avoided if you make sure that the timber you use is perfectly seasoned.

The timber should be ordered in strips three inches wide by seven-eighths of an inch thick. It should be dressed both sides, and be seven-eighths of an inch after dressing. It is comparatively inexpensive to have the timber dressed (i.e. planed) at the saw mill. Preferably the battens should be dressed all round. It is disproportionately expensive to have the edges dressed, and comparatively simple to do this work with a hand plane.

Order these strips in convenient lengths. For instance, if your set is sixteen feet in height, and your flats are all to be four feet wide, the timber might all be in sixteen and fourteen foot lengths. One length sixteen feet will give one upright, and one fourteen feet four cross pieces of three feet six inches. The balance of the width is made up by the width of the two uprights—three inches each—making four feet in all.

These dimensions are suitable for fairly general use. If the scenery that is wanted must be small—say, ten feet or under in height—material two and a half inches can be safely used. Amateurs

rarely use scenery that is greater than sixteen feet in height. Eighteen feet is the standard height for flats in the professional theatre, and these are usually tapered in thickness to make them easier to handle by lowering the centre of gravity. This is rather difficult work for the amateur carpenter to undertake. Sixteen foot flats can be used quite well in practically any theatre.

Flax sheeting is a satisfactory canvas with which to cover the flats. It is sold in sheets six feet wide and costs about 1s. 9d. a yard.

The illustrations give three examples of well built scenery. All three sets were used by the Crescent Theatre, a "Little Theatre" in Birmingham. The first two were for a production of Bernard Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, a play that gives the designer considerable scope, of which Miss Carlier, who designed these settings, took full advantage. The third photograph shows the set for A. A. Milne's *Ariadne*, a play that does not suggest the same possibilities for interesting treatment in the setting. Yet in its way this set, also designed by Miss Carlier, is as interesting as the other two. But no matter how clever the designer may be, the result will not be satisfactory unless the scenery is well made.



# RHYTHM

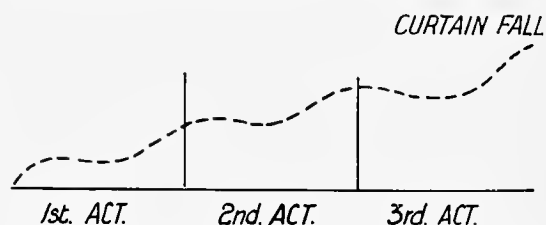
By F. E. DORAN

Secretary, Manchester Playgoers' Club

EVERY work of art has rhyme and reason. Without these it cannot exist in the world of art, and it becomes part of the great jumble of what might have been. Particularly is this so in play production, a form of art expression which, perhaps, offers greater complexities than any other, except architecture. But great though the difficulties may be, they must be surmounted if play production is to be accepted among the arts. Rhythm is the key: Rhythm, a noun—something real: defined as harmony, metre, rhyme, beat, number, poetry. But definitions do not help us very much. Words are not sufficient, and dictionaries are inadequate to describe the manifestation of the human spirit. But inadequate or not, words are my tools, and with words I must convey this important message of Rhythm.

All plays are an appeal to the emotions. Without this emotional appeal there is no drama. With nothing but emotion drama is "mere theatre." Drama is "theatre" plus intellect. A good play lives because it appeals to the intellect through the emotions. Take away the intellectual content, and a play is without lasting values. The converse is equally true. If a play is all intellect, it is not only ephemeral, but dull, like a time-table. Having found a play with these two elements of "theatre" and "intellect," the producer must bring out its rhythm. He must introduce a pulsation, a rise and fall, a crescendo of varying impacts until, at the conclusion, the

show. It would lack variety. Its plane of interest would be too monotonous and positive. It would weary the body, and hypnotize the mind. Variation must be introduced, so that the progress of the play is a series of stimulations and rests, thus—



Each act concludes on a climax, and each successive climax is higher than its predecessor, the finale being the highest and most conclusive. Shakespeare knew this trick (shall we be modern and call it technique?) of alternation.

A producer has two main avenues along which to direct his rhythmic demands, namely, the play as a play, and the actors as such. The construction of a good play enables these two avenues to be explored. The author makes one situation tense, the next humorous, and so on.

A good play to examine for this rhythmic content is Shaw's *St. Joan*. Examine the first act between Dunois and the steward. The dramatic tension is steadily built up like the noise of galloping cavalry; then when the Maid enters, she comes into a full company of expectant minds, all concentrated on her, all in accord with her, all in mental and emotional contact with her. From then the play builds up, slows down, twists here, turns there, but all the time on a single theme—the destiny of Joan.

This quality of rhythm should be carefully gauged by the producer. He should read his script carefully, and get his mental picture clearly recorded—the dramatic value of each page should be examined, the full dramatic and emotional content of each sentence worked out, and above all, each line and each character put in proper

1st. ACT.	2nd. ACT.	3rd. ACT.

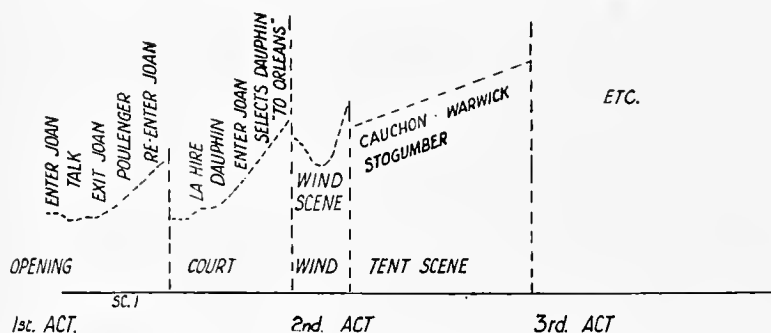
audience is in complete *rappor*t with the play and players. Let the fact be thus represented.

The broken line is intended to indicate the steady growth of interest and grip of the audience. Such growth, however, would not make a good

relation to the rhythm of the whole. The result may be charted.

This is only a rough indication.

When the producer has evolved such a chart, he can discuss it with the cast as a whole, so that



each responsible person can see at a glance exactly where his or her act falls into the general scheme.

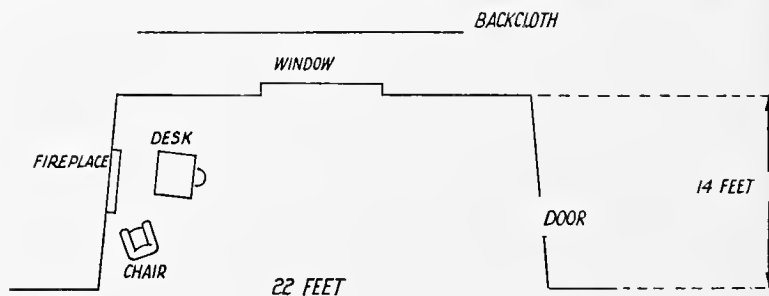
Having arrived at his conclusions about the rhythm in the script, the producer must next analyse his human material. He will not be a free agent. Human nature is not easily harnessed to a single mind. A loyal team recognize a producer's difficulties if the producer himself is competent. It is when a team feel that a producer makes wild experiments and is guessing that the members become restless. The reason for this is easily understood. Each member of a cast can see (or ought to see) his or her part quite clearly. Consequently, unless there is sound reason behind a producer's experiments and guesses, the individual member will seek to go the direct way as it is seen through his or her part. With a weak producer this attitude, adopted by the cast, can easily produce a series of extraordinarily good *personal* performances, but the general structure of the play will be destroyed. Therefore the producer must control his players and adjust and relate them in rhythm.

Each part will have its own rhythm. This, when related to the others, should form an emotional pattern.

It is difficult to illustrate this by example, as each play demands its own development.

However, analysis of an hypothetical part will illustrate how the principle can be applied. Think of a triangle play. A and B are married. C is the lover. B, the innocent party in the triangle, has been told of the intrigue by a well meaning but gossiping friend. B disbelieves, and on arrival home finds an incriminating letter, which confirms the friend's story, but the letter is unsigned, and is without names. How can it be used to prove the partner's guilt? Imagine an empty room. We have seen the letter received, thrown down, and forgotten. We see the entry

of B, the various emotions of disbelief, suspicion, rejection, suspicion again, anxiety, disbelief; then—discovery of the letter. The absence of names creates hope. The circumstances are too coincident for innocence. The height of anxiety is revealed—then the guilty A enters. There is tension. Interrogation begins, and ends with the production of the proof. Up to the beginning of the interrogation regard this as a mute scene, with B pacing up and down, and so on. Now this pacing should be carefully modulated; it should not be too long and it should not be too quick; it should be neither scrappy nor jerky. It must be *timed*. Only experience and the individual concerned can properly gauge the time. The occasion



is one for the use of artistry. Every look, every step, every pause, must have its place. If they are too long the attention of the audience will decline. If they are too short, the full height of interest will not be achieved, and the entrance of A will lose its force. If they are broken up and fussy, the attention will be shattered. The

producer must see that the actor builds up the scene, but he can give little help except by criticism. Now in such a scene pacing may be employed, B going up and down, from side to side, from the window to the door. Pacing is often the amateur's downfall; yet failure can

in front of the fireplace is, say, 20 ft., or exactly eight paces. If normal pacing is, say, 20 in. or 1 ft. 8 in., then twelve paces will be required—a difference of half as many again. There will be a time lag of 50 per cent. Now the audience neither knows nor cares about a person's paces. The tempo of the play, however, is affected. If the 30-in. pacer goes at the rate of two paces a second and obtains the right effect, then the 20-in. pacer must also adopt the same TIME, time being the important factor, not the number of paces.

Now assume that the desk is the objective, that it is seven and a half paces away—the half must

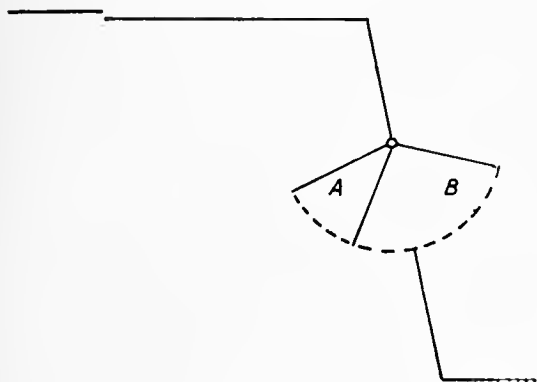


FIG. 1

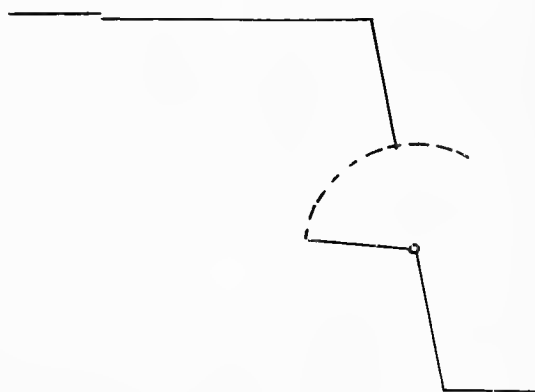


FIG. 3

be watched, or the pacing will be seven paces and a shuffle. The actor should rehearse the distance until it is walked or paced, slowly or hurriedly, according to requirements, without any flurry or awkwardness at the end. The ending of a walk is particularly important when a speaking exit has to be made.

To continue with the consideration of the hypothetical situation, we will assume that the discovery has been made, that the argument is at an end, and that B is leaving the house for ever. The door must open away from the footlights (Fig. 1), making the arc either A or B but not as Fig. 2 or Fig. 3.

In Fig. 1 the door provides a background for the final shot in the verbal battle.

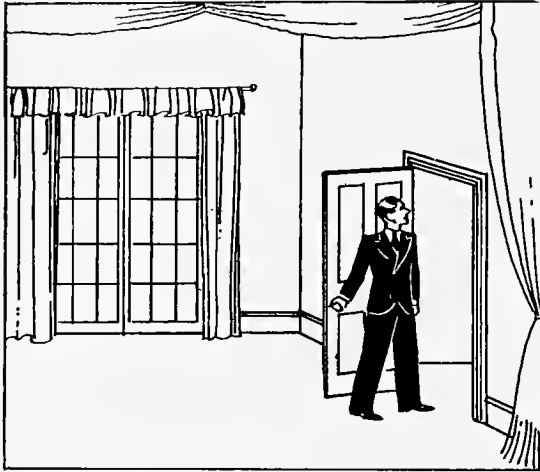
The illustrations show how effective this use of the door can be, but its use can also be a failure if the actor has not carefully rehearsed his paces, for he must arrive at the door with that leg and

easily be avoided if the principle of rhythm is known and applied.

Each step should be part of a pattern, and calculated to avoid half steps or broken steps. Steps are, of course, variable. Some individuals take longer strides than others. Imagine an actor with a normal pace of 2 ft. 6 in.—30 in. (This is a full marching pace, and though it is long it will serve for illustrative purposes.) Here is the plan of a scene. On the desk is the letter. B enters, and crosses to the mirror over the fireplace.

It will be seen that from the door to a spot just

arm farthest from the audience extended towards the door. This will enable the actor to face the audience to speak. If his pacing is wrong he will have his back to the audience, his mouth will be

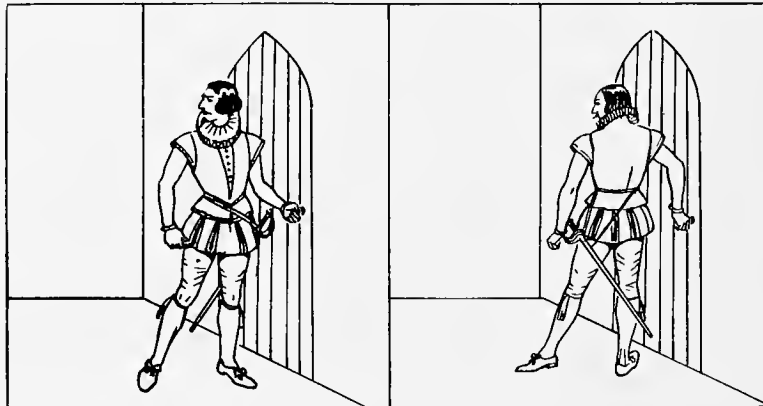


masked by his shoulder, and his exit will be awkward.

This rule, like all rules of acting, is made to be broken, but when a genius breaks a rule for his own purpose, he usually makes a new rule that is

applicable to himself only. This matter of timing and exactitude applies no matter how many instances can be quoted of when a great actor did so and so in contravention of the rule. The great actor would not have become a great actor if at some time or another he had not had the alphabet of acting firmly instilled into him. The amateur actor should do this timing subconsciously, but he must be told about it first. Then practice will make perfect. An actor who has this technique at his finger tips will dominate a cast that lacks such experience, and a producer is at a great disadvantage if he is expected to teach the others the elements of the craft. Nevertheless, the cast must be in balance, particularly in modern plays.

Balance and rhythm are two most important elements. For balance, each character has a relation to everything in the play and the cast. For rhythm, each player has definite metre to strike out. When balance and rhythm are right, little can go wrong so far as acting is concerned. But a producer who knows his job in so far as balance and rhythm are concerned will also be artist enough to see that his costumes and settings are also balanced and in rhythm with the play.



# TUDOR

By NEVIL TRUMAN

*Hon. Secretary, Nottingham Playgoers' Club*

WE come to the years 1509 to 1558.

## DRESS

A larger number of clothes were visible.

The *Shirt* (men) was white and had frills at the wrist and neck, with the breast embroidered, chiefly in red and black or even gold, where it showed. It had sleeves sufficiently large to allow them to be pulled through the slashings of the outer garments to make the puffed "blistering." Under Queen Mary a Spanish ruff was added.

The *Doublet* (men) was of knee length, with large slit sleeves and a full pleated skirt. The shoulders, eked out with padding, were extremely broad. The slits were vertical and regular, their ends being closed with jewelled brooches for the rich. The doublet was fastened down the front to the waist; below was left unfastened. It was fur-lined, and the lining showed at the bottom of the skirt. Under Queen Mary the shape became more self-fitting and padding went out of favour. The skirt had a pleated effect. Over it was worn

The *Jerkin* (men), which was of ankle length for old men; others wore it to just above the knees. It was an overcoat, with a huge wide collar and fur-lined revers down the front. It could be sleeveless; or have a half-sleeve formed of one large puff from shoulder to elbow, or have a hanging sleeve from the elbow.

The *Vest* (men) was worn only when the doublet was cut low in the chest to display the vest. It was of elaborately embroidered velvet or brocade and was sleeveless.

The *Belt* (men) had become a mere sash.

The *Cape* (men) was circular to just below the waist, and banded with several lines of horizontal braiding at the edge.

*Stays* (women) were of leather or bone and with the *Hoop* (women), which was bell-shaped, formed the foundation for the tight and smooth outer garments.

The *Chemise* (women) was embroidered; a

good deal of it showed when it covered the chest, as the bodice was low and square.

The *Petticoat* (women) was a most important garment, and was of brocaded velvet or silk, with



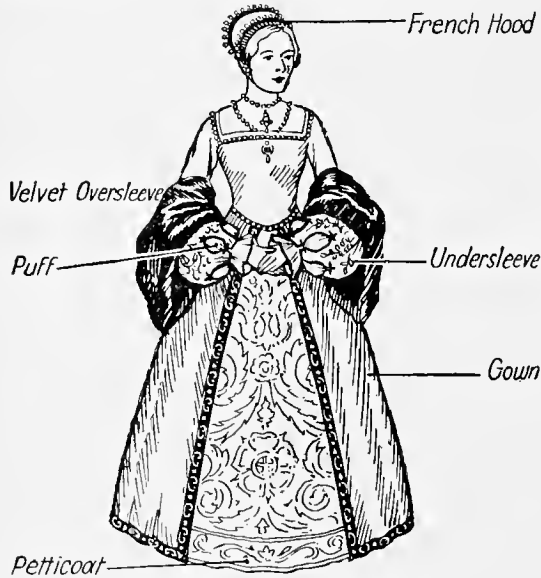
HENRY VIII

large symmetrical designs of fruit and leaves. It was stretched tightly over the hoop, and its pattern matched the undersleeves of the gown.

The *Gown* (women) was bell-shaped, with a skirt open from waist to hem in an inverted V shape. The waist was gored and the long padded bodice went to a point below the waist line. The square cut neck was low and showed the bare skin unless the chemise was worn gathered up to the neck. The lined bodice was fastened at the back, and as its shoulder seams were long the armhole was not in its natural place, but about two inches down the arm, where a distinct line was shown. These sleeves were wide at the elbow and banded with fur or velvet; thus was disclosed the tight undersleeve, which at the elbow became a huge puff or "bishop" sleeve. The undersleeve

matched the petticoat. Under Queen Mary the low neck disappeared in favour of a high cut bodice with an open collar to just below the throat; its edges were turned back, and spread out on either side of the throat and over the back.

The *Partlet* (women) was a fine linen neck-filling, with the older fashioned square cut neck.



QUEEN MARY, 1541 (LONDON)

#### LEGS

The *Breeches* (men) were puffed and slashed like the doublet, and had a codpiece, which showed where the doublet was unfastened. They were worn under the doublet. The codpiece was a padded flap at the fork of the legs. It was tied with ribbons called "points," with the white shirt pulled through at each side to show.

*Stockings* (men) were for the first time of silk, but of a thicker silk than modern stockings.

#### FEET

*Shoes* (men and women) became more natural in shape, though they were still bun toed. They covered the instep and had a series of slits lengthways through which different coloured materials were pulled.

#### HAIR

*Hair* (men) was short. Men were clean shaven or a short fringe of beard, with similar whiskers, was worn. The King's hair was red.

*Hair* (women) was parted in the middle, or less often braided, but only the front portion was visible. Under Queen Mary it was puffed out instead of being flattened, and more was seen by thrusting back the hat.

#### HATS

*Hats* (men) were the black velvet square cap, familiarized by Sir Thomas More and Holbein. The velvet skull cap and Henry's Tudor cap were also black. The latter was a circle of stiffened velvet gathered into a narrow brim. It is still worn by doctors in the universities. If one side only was turned up, a jewel held the single turn-up. If all sides were turned up, then they were regularly jewelled all round. A long, curling ostrich feather was placed across the front or slightly at the side, and the crown was flat. The Marian cap was gathered into a head band and had no brim.



THOMAS CROMWELL, 1537 (LONDON)

*Hats* (women) were of two kinds—the Gable and the French Hood. Both were elaborate, and consisted of three or four different pieces.

The *Gable Hat* (women) first had a strip of brown or black silk crossed over the forehead and sewn across in stripes. This showed beneath the gable point. Next the stiff white hood, or coif, which was jewelled in front about two or three

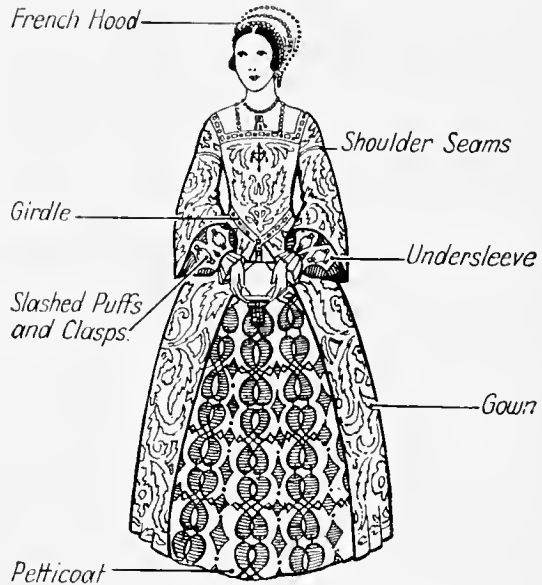
inches wide (or the jewelled piece was separate) was worn.

Later was worn a long bag of velvet or satin, usually black, which was sewn to the cap, and the whole was covered with a rectangular piece of material long enough to form the gable or sloped roof part on top of the head, with falls on either side of the face. The pendant pieces had strings attached for the purpose of tying the sides back on themselves so that the ends were facing upwards and nearly reaching the first slope of the gable. Subsequently, these ends were permanently sewn upwards in the same position. The strings might also be used to fasten the ends together by passing the ends of the strings under the chin. The material of this piece was velvet, silk, or embroidered fabric. Stiffening was used to maintain the acute angles in position.

The *French Hood* (women) came in under Queen Mary. First was worn a flat frill of gold

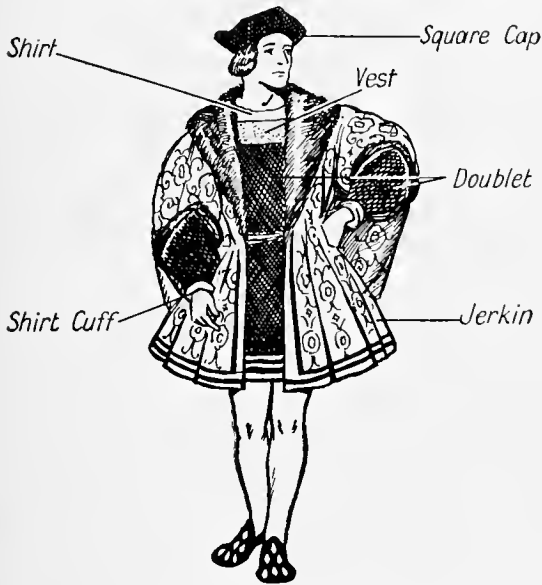
far back on the head with a slight peak over the forehead. A velvet strip hung from the back.

A jewelled *Girdle* (women) surrounded the waist and hung down for a good length in front, finishing with a beautifully designed piece of goldsmith's work in the form of a pendant, ball, or cross. This was large and richly jewelled.



PRINCESS ELIZABETH, 1546 (HAMPTON COURT)

From the men's girdles hung short daggers which were for ornament rather than use.



DR. ZELLE (BRUSSELS)

net or white lawn. Over this and behind it was a two-inch wide stiff band of velvet or satin, edged with pearls and covering and curling round the ears. The velvet bag was added as before, or a short veil was fastened to the back of the head. This type of hat revealed more of the face. Under Queen Mary the head-dress became less stiff and elaborate, and was a simple black velvet cap set

## SUMMARY

### MEN

#### Dress

Shirt—white, frilled wrist and neck, embroidered breast, large sleeves. Under Mary a ruff added.

Doublet—knee length, large slit sleeves, full pleated skirt, fur lined, wide shoulders. Under Mary closer fit, and less padding.

Jerkin—long or short fur-lined coat, huge flat collar and revers, sleeveless or one large puff, knee length, open in front.

Vest—sleeveless, embroidered velvet or brocade, worn if doublet cut low enough to show it.

Cape—(Mary only) circular to just below waist.

Belt—a sash.

*Legs*

Breeches—puffed and slashed, codpiece.

Stockings—thick silk.

*Feet*

Shoes—more natural, cover instep.



THE GABLE HOOD, 1525

*Hair*

Short, clean shaven, short fringe beard and whiskers.

*Hats*

Black velvet square cap.

Velvet skull cap.

Stiff velvet circle in narrow brim, one or all sides turned up, jewel, flat crown, feather across front.

## WOMEN

*Dress*

Stays—bone or leather.

Hoop—bell-shaped.

Chemise—embroidered.

Petticoat—stretched, large pattern, matched undersleeves.

Gown—bell-shape, skirt open in front from waist, gored waist, lined and padded bodice long and pointed. Square, low neck, back laced. Shoulder seams long so armhole is two inches down arm. Sleeves wide at elbow with broad fur or velvet bands. Tight under sleeves of fabric.

(Mary only) bodice cut high, collar open to below throat and spread out each side and at back.

Partlet—(Mary only) linen, filling in neck.

*Hair*

Mid parted or braided, only seen in front.  
Under Mary puffed and more seen.

*Hats*

Gable—1st strip, brown or black silk; 2nd, stiff white coif or hood jewelled; 3rd, long black velvet or satin bag; 4th, black silk, velvet or embroidered strip.

French hood—(Mary only) 1st flat, gold net or lawn frill; 2nd, stiff velvet or satin pearled band; 3rd, velvet bag or short veil on back of head.

Cap—(Mary only) simple black velvet on back of head, peak on forehead, velvet strip hung behind.

## PEASANTS

## MEN

*Dress*

Plain cloth or serge, no blisters.

Shirts—unbleached linen or calico, narrow turn-down collars.

Mantle or gown—only for rich citizens.

*Legs*

Breeches—two puffs to knee.

Stockings—wool, often white.

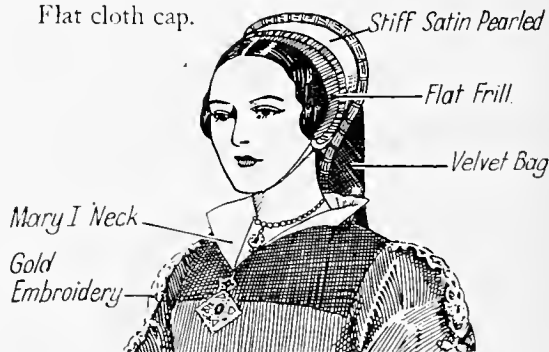
*Feet*

Shoes—leather, slipper shaped.

*Hats*

Low crowned felt, wide brim.

Flat cloth cap.



THE FRENCH HOOD, 1541

## WOMEN

*Dress*

Coarse serge or cloth, dark blue being mostly worn.

Gown—tight, long bodice, tight sleeves, back laced. Skirt split to show petticoat. Girls had short skirts pleated to bodice.

Petticoat—apron.

*Legs*

Stockings—gray wool.

*Feet*

Felt or leather shoes.



# ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS OF FACIAL EXPRESSION

By ALFRED HARTOP

*Perruquier and Lecturer to Amateur Societies*

IT may not be found easy to reconcile two subjects—probably far apart in the minds of most readers—such as make-up and anatomy of the face, but if the tell-tale facial evidence of character traits is to be understood, it is certain that there is no study more fruitful of instruction, or leading to more interesting subjects of inquiry, than that of the structure of the face as the immediate source of expression. By anatomy in its relation to the art of make-up is meant not merely the study of the bones and muscles of the face, but the observation of all the characteristics that distinguish the countenance and constitute form and expression. A knowledge of the subtle changes that take place from youth to age; of the evidence of robust health or sickness; of the peculiarities that are associated with occupation; of the sentiments that prevail in the expression of a face in repose, belongs to this special province as much as does the study of the face when it is affected by emotion. There is as much variety in expression of countenance as there is variety of colour, feature, hair, beard, etc.

Viewed in this comprehensive light, anatomy forms a science of great interest, and one that stimulates careful observation, and teaches us to distinguish what is essential to exact expression, that directs attention to appearances on which the effect and force of character delineations depend. Despite the fact that much valuable information on this subject is available, it is neglected and, consequently, character make-up is arrived at by a process of guessing. There is in actuality failure among numerous players who make-up themselves to achieve the characteristics that are necessary to add to the effect of costume and the spoken word. Therefore, there is good reason for emphasizing the importance of a knowledge of the subject. A knowledge of physiognomy, but chiefly a familiar acquaintance with the facial

muscles and the peculiarities and effect of their action, is necessary to correct this fault. In the limbs and body, the muscles possessing the power of contraction, and, consequently, of producing motion, are attached to the bones and are distinct and powerful; but as in the face they have merely to operate on the skin, the lips, nostrils, and eyelids, they require less power, and are, therefore, more delicate. This power is not always directly under the control of the will; it is often involuntary, and is inseparably united to the conditions of the mind. When a facial muscle contracts it moves the skin and produces folds, or wrinkles, in the moved skin, which run perpendicularly to the direction of the muscular fibres. Frequently repeated contractions of any one muscle tend to leave their permanent impress upon the countenance. Thus the very spirit by which the body is animated is revealed; the sad gradually acquire the prevailing depressed look of sadness, and the joyous the corresponding permanent smiling look of joyousness. Such expressions constitute a universal language that is understood before a word cheerful or otherwise is spoken, or any indication in the movement of the features of what prevails in the mind is given. By learning the action and the purpose for the action of the facial muscles it is possible to estimate fairly accurately the meaning of the presence of certain wrinkles on the face.

At this stage a few examples, illustrated by the three faces at the top of Fig. 23, will suffice. These show an easy way of learning facial expression. It is based on the teaching of Superville, who uses simple wrinkle lines to express changes of emotion.

1. Horizontal lines suggest calmness, serenity, and nobility. Such lines in architecture convey the idea of calmness and grandeur, which he compares to the cedar tree with its horizontal branches. The straight lines of the eye, the nose,

and the mouth in the serene, unruffled countenance, suggest the best human sentiments.

2. Lines directed obliquely upwards and outwards express gaiety, laughter, and lightness as in Chinese architecture. These oblique lines of joy are produced by drawing up the corners of the mouth, as seen in the optimist's expression. This pushes up the cheeks, which in turn push up the outer corners of the eyes, and produce the characteristic crow's-feet of laughter just below the outer corners of the eyes.

3. Lines directed obliquely downwards and outwards reflect sadness, grief, and pain, which Superville likens to the architecture and kind of trees that are usually seen in cemeteries. These lines are produced by drawing down the corners of the mouth, as seen in the pessimist's expression. Wrinkles also develop naturally as the skin loses its elasticity and the flesh shrinks with age. The necessary lining and light and shade to depict a few stages of the change are also shown.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF COLOURS

All colours may be divided into two groups; namely, simple, or primary, colours, and compound colours.

*Simple* colours are those that cannot be split up into other colours. In other words, they are fundamental colours, the term being practically synonymous with primary colours; in the pigment theory red, yellow, and blue are included.

*Compound* colours are those that are obtained by mixing two colours. There are two important groups of compound colours, namely, secondary and tertiary colours.

*Secondary* colours are produced by mixing primary colours. They are orange, green, and purple. Orange is obtained by mixing red and yellow; green by mixing blue and yellow; purple is a mixture of blue and red.

*Tertiary* colours are russet, citron, and olive. Each is composed of two secondary colours. Russet is obtained by mixing orange and purple; citron is a mixture of orange and green; olive is obtained by mixing green and purple.

A pure, or full, colour may be said to be an unadulterated colour, and the most intense expression of a colour without any addition of black or white being made.

A broken colour is one that is produced by the mixture of two or more pure colours.

Although black and white are not really colours, as they are used in producing shades and tints of colours they are usually spoken of as colours. These two colours and their mixture, which produces grey, also silver and gold, are sometimes termed neutral, or passive, colours.

A shade is a pure colour that is mixed with black. A tint is a pure colour mixed with white.

The tone of a colour is an expression which, in the strict consideration of colour, is confined to the shade and tints of a pure colour. Tone may also be considered as referring to the combined effect of several colours placed in juxtaposition, or to the general effect of a single colour. In either case reference may be made to the prevailing tone, or to such qualities as luminosity, purity, warmth, shade, tint, etc. For instance, it may be said that one colour combination is of a cold tone, that another is warm, etc., or, a single colour may be spoken of as being a deep tone of blue, a warm tone of red, a bright tone of orange, etc.

The hue of colour may be said to be a specific colour that is mixed with a small amount of another colour. Thus, an orange hue of red is made by adding a small amount of orange to a pure red. The term "hue" is sometimes used to refer to that quality which distinguishes one colour, primary or compound, from another. For instance, red differs in hue from green, yellow from orange, etc.

Before passing to a consideration of what may be termed the attributes of different colours, or their behaviour under varying conditions, it is desirable for a user of theatrical cosmetics to be acquainted with the nature and composition of the colouring materials that are employed in their manufacture.

Begin with the simple primary colours of pure red, pure yellow, and pure blue. These are the most important, as all mixtures are secondaries, and from these three, with the aid of black and white, can be obtained every desired shade and tint.

*Red.* A relatively large number of suitable red colouring substances are available for the colouring of rouges, grease paints, etc. The most important is carmine, which is a product of animal

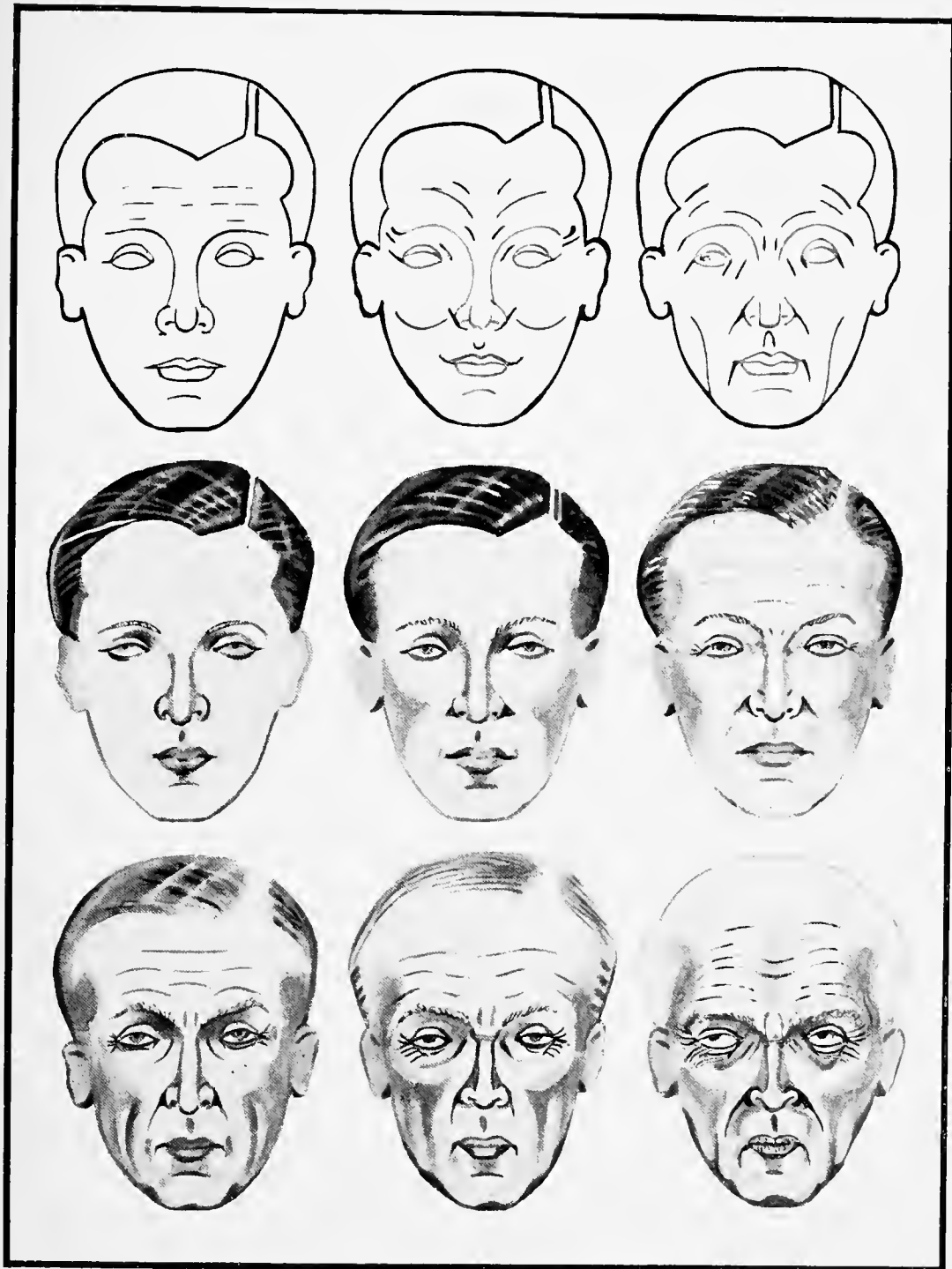


FIG. 23. SIMPLE LINES IN FACIAL EXPRESSION

origin obtained from cochineal. In addition, there are some pigments of a mineral character, also a number of suitable coal-tar dyes.

*Carmine* is a rich, purplish red colour obtained from cochineal—a scale insect that lives in certain species of Cacti, and is found principally in Mexico, Central America, and countries of suitable climate for its cultivation. The dried bodies of this insect contain up to 10 per cent of the colouring matter, called “carminic acid,” which is extracted and prepared into powder or liquid of a rich, transparent colour, which fades rapidly in the sun.

*Vermilion* is a brilliant, durable, red pigment consisting of mercuric sulphide, obtained by grinding the mineral cinnabar to a fine powder, or it is manufactured artificially from mercury and sulphur. The substance is a bright red, tending toward orange. Various shades are made.

*Eosine* is the name that is applied to various useful synthetic, or aniline, red dyes, which produce somewhat yellowish shades of red or pink.

*Carmoisine*, another dye used in cosmetics, produces a magenta-red, and is employed as a synthetic substitute for carmine.

*Red Lakes* are largely made from dyestuffs that are chemically related to alizarine.

In addition to the red colouring matters already dealt with, a number of earthy matters are used as pigments. They owe their colour chiefly to ferric oxide, a perfectly harmless substance that is prepared in a number of forms, and they differ somewhat in colour according to their natural origin and mode of preparation. These are known by different names, such as “Indian red,” “Venetian red,” “Armenian bole,” etc.

*Armenian Bole* is an earth, coloured brown-red with ferric oxide, found in Armenia and elsewhere. It gives good flesh tints when diluted with suitable white substances, and is largely employed for making sunburn washes, liquid powders, and grease paints.

*Yellow.* The yellow pigments consist of ochres, chromes, and sulphides.

*Ochres* are natural clay, coloured yellow to brown by the presence of ferric oxide. Yellow ochre is a rather dull yellow colour; golden ochre is of a brighter and deeper shade of yellow; dark ochre is of a deeper tone, and may be described

as a somewhat greenish brown-yellow. Ochres are extensively used, in conjunction with Armenian bole, for a variety of flesh tints.

*Chromes* are artificial pigments, consisting of various insoluble metallic salts of chromic acid. Chrome yellow is a chromate of lead.

*Blue.* The commonest blue pigments are Prussian blue, cobalt blue, and ultramarine.

*Prussian Blue* is a deep and somewhat greenish shade of blue, obtained by oxidization from green vitriol and potassium. Some authorities regard grease paint coloured with this substance as toxic.

*Cobalt Blue* is essentially a compound of cobalt oxide with alumina. The purest variety is used for cosmetrical purposes, and is innocuous.

*Ultramarine* was formerly obtained from the rare mineral lapis lazuli, and was expensive. nowadays good ultramarine is made from kaolin, carbonate of soda, and sulphur. It is cheap, harmless, and extensively used.

*White* substances are a necessary basis in the manufacture of grease paints and face powder to produce the requisite tints, and as essential vehicles when dyes are employed.

*Zinc-white*, or pure zinc oxide, is used extensively for the preparation of face powder, liquid powder, and grease paints. It has a soothing and mildly astringent action on the skin.

*Kaolin* is a fine white clay, or aluminium silicate, used for face powder. It is adherent and a good absorbent.

*Talc* is a naturally occurring form of magnesium silicate, and, when finely powdered, constitutes “french chalk.”

*Black* pigments, without exception, are chemically similar, and consist of carbon in an amorphous form. Lampblack is the soot formed by burning material rich in carbon, such as mineral oils, naphthaline, etc. It is largely used in the making of chinese or indian ink, kohl, or black eyebrow cosmetic. Charcoal and burnt cork are made by carbonizing wood and bark. “Ivory black” is carbonized ivory or bone.

*Brown* earths that resemble the ochres are used for darker flesh tints. These earths are sienna and umber. Raw sienna is a light yellowish brown; “burnt sienna” is much brighter and redder in colour. Raw umber is a dark and greenish brown; “burnt umber” has a warmer tone, and is a dark reddish brown.

## SWITCHBOARDS

By C. HAROLD RIDGE, A.R.S.M., D.I.C., and F. S. ALDRED, A.M.Inst.C.E.

*Consulting Engineers*

CIRCUITS have to be grouped to provide simplicity of operation. This grouping raises a debatable point. It can be argued that it is better for the circuits to be arranged irrespective of the particular colour of light that they control. Such an arrangement has definite merits for a "Little" theatre, but in the commercial theatre it is the general practice to group the "coloured" circuits in banks, one to each colour, with an independent bank for circuits such as proscenium spots, floods, F.O.H. spots, etc., lights that have no fixed colour.

As the dimmers conform to the circuit grouping they will also be in colour banks, each bank having a separate length of shafting, the rotation of which is communicated to the dimmers by the mechanism described. The shaft itself is rotated by a lever or hand wheel attached to one end of it, or by gearing, if slow motion is desired. This arrangement is known as "Colour Master Control." An example of its use is given. Suppose the "amber" circuits in the battens are at full intensity, with the dimmers on the "blue" bank set at full check, or with all resistance "in," and with the circuit switches closed. The two shafts can then be turned in opposite directions at the same time. This turning will cause all the amber lights to dim and all the blues to come up to full intensity, thus producing the change from one colour to another.

The addition of a worm and wheel to drive a vertical shaft, or shafts, with bevel wheel drive to each colour shaft through clutches, each clutch capable of bringing into action one of two bevels driving a third bevel keyed to the colour shaft, results in one being able to drive all the shafts together in the same or opposite direction, and gives Grand Master Cross Control.

This to-day is the limit reached with mechanical gearing, which itself is capable of satisfying exacting demands of control. Progress is producing designs in which operation is effected by means of magnetic clutches that allow each

dimmer to work independently in either direction, and not in groups—a distinct advance in refinement, and approaching that obtained by the Salaman Hydraulic Control, in which each dimmer is actuated by a piston in a small cylinder under oil pressure. A two-way valve to each cylinder admits the oil in or out, at speeds differing over a wide range, so that each dimmer is capable of both speed and direction variation.

Mention must be made of pre-setting devices that allow the switches, or dimmers, or both, to be set to produce in advance the required lighting for a number of scenes, the change when desired being made by simple switching operations.

Dimmers should be fitted with scales, preferably marked in tens from 0 to 100, with the half divisions also indicated. A pointer attached to the mechanism moves over the scale, and gives the dimmer position, and is extremely useful in making up lighting plots. The scales should be arranged so that the pointer is at 100 when all resistance is out of the circuit.

An examination of Fig. 41 will assist in an understanding of dimmer controlling mechanism. The drawing shows the arrangement that is adopted on a combined switch and dimmer board manufactured by the Strand Electric and Engineering Co., Ltd.

It is possible that more stage switchboards will be found on the actor's right-hand side of the stage than on the other, but the exceptions are far too numerous to enable a rule to be established and proved.

If there is a rule, it is that the switchboard should be on the same side as the stage-manager, but it is more true to say that the switchboard decides the stage-manager's position, for he should certainly be near the board and its operator. The only factor that really influences its position is the design of the stage area. The switchboard should be on the side that gives sufficient space of convenient shape. Designers of theatres appear to forget all about such things as switchboards,

with the result that the design, or even the building itself, has frequently gone quite beyond the point where alterations are possible to give proper accommodation, and consequently the board has to be erected in any odd corner. If space is available on either side, theatrical circumstances favour the actor's right-hand position,

to it, and, incidentally, checking unauthorized persons from going to the switchboard and coming into contact with bare metal carrying current.

Switchboards have been built that are capable of being operated from a distant position by mechanical means, such as tracker wires, hydraulic, or

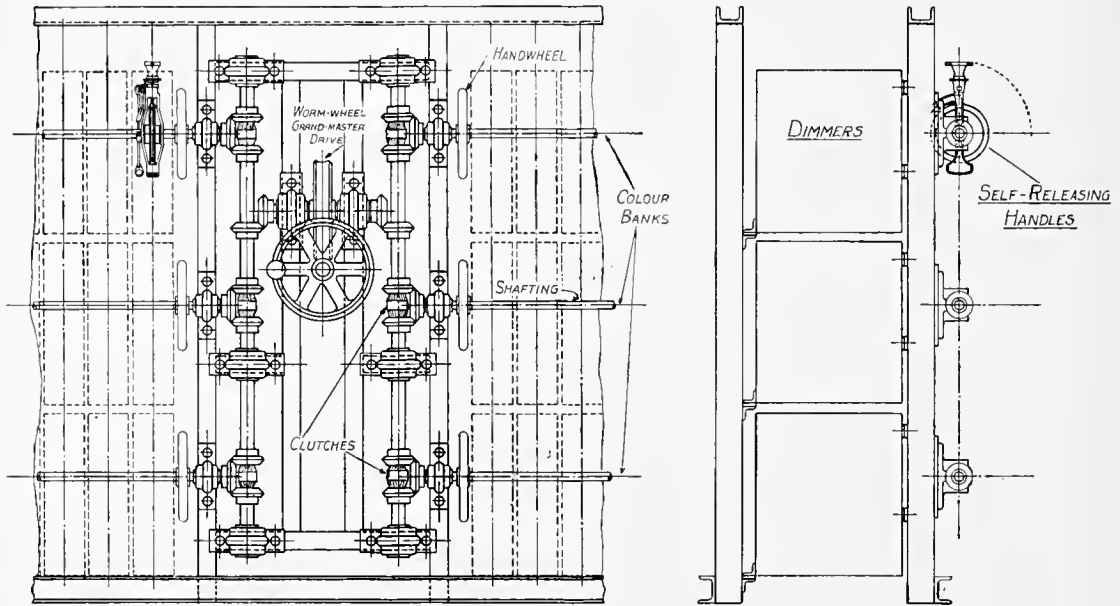


FIG. 41

especially if the electrical intake room is also in that position, thus shortening the runs of heavy and costly cables feeding the board.

The best position on the side that is decided upon is down stage with the back of the board facing, and in line with, the proscenium wall, so that the operator has merely to turn his head sideways to see the stage through the wings. This position has the additional advantage that the railing round the switchboard platform is most useful, for upon it can be mounted and operated arc, or incandescent, spot lanterns. If the switchboard is too long for this position, it must be set in line with the side wall of the stage, backing on to it. The obvious disadvantage is that the operator has to turn round to see the acting area, and he is farther away from it. The board, to avoid taking up valuable stage area, should be carried on a switchboard platform, about eight feet above stage level, a cat ladder giving access

electrical means, in which case the controls are mounted on a relatively small panel fixed in a suitable position in the auditorium. Their use, limited owing to the heavy cost, enables the operator to have a clear view of the whole of the acting area and of the lighting, and also makes it possible for the actual switchboard and dimmers to be placed in a room by, or under, the stage, thereby freeing valuable stage space that is occupied by the directly controlled boards.

#### CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING SWITCHBOARD DESIGN

In practice, there are a number of conditions that affect design. They may be grouped under the following heads—

1. The form of the electrical supply.
2. Total number of stage lighting circuits to be controlled, involving the number of circuits

(and/or colours) to be incorporated in apparatus such as floats and battens.

3. The extent and arrangement of electrical control, including group and colour switching.

4. The extent and arrangement of dimmer control.

5. Space and position available for the switch-board, bearing in mind noise of operation.

6. Cost of manufacture and installation.

7. Regulations of the various authorities that may be concerned.

Consider the case of a board that is fed from a two wire supply of either alternating or direct current at a normal voltage between 100 and 240 volts. As the question of balancing the load does not arise, and as we are not concerned with high or possibly dangerous voltages in any part of the installation, the switchboard may be of the open or live-front type, in which the bus-bars and switches are mounted on the front face of the panels with dimmers, usually of the slider type, below. Such a board is the cheapest to construct and occupies the least space, all apparatus being accessible from the front for repairs and adjustments. It can be fixed direct to the wall, or, at the most, eighteen inches away from it, if the actual connexions to switches and fuses are at the back of the panels. The obvious drawback to this type is the possibility of getting a shock by inadvertently touching "live" metal, and, although the regulations permit this type, it is probable that in the future all stage boards will have to be of the dead-front pattern, in which all current-carrying parts are fixed at the back of the panels with insulated operating handles brought through to the front. With this type, which is set away from the wall, space not less than two feet has to be provided for access to the back. For the board itself there is a usual overall depth of two feet, with three feet in front for the operator. The minimum practical width required for the switchboard platform is seven feet.

When the supply is either three-wire D.C. or four-wire A.C., the board voltage will be twice or 1.73 times the circuit voltage respectively. It can be as high as 480 volts D.C. or 400 volts A.C.—both can give unpleasant shocks. It is therefore essential that switchboards connected to such supplies should be of the dead-front pattern,

especially as their operation is frequently undertaken by non-technical persons.

Without unduly stressing the subject of electric shock, a few remarks on it will be of interest. The effects of shock vary, in the first place, according to the conditions under which contact with live metal is made and the path the current takes through the body. For instance, if one hand makes contact, the current may flow through the body to earth and the results, possibly not very severe, vary with the state of dryness of the skin and the nature of the floor and footwear. On the other hand, if contact is made on opposite poles with both hands, serious results are likely to occur from this short circuit. Generally speaking, D.C. causes shock by its effect on the blood and nerves, and by burning at the points of contact, whereas A.C., although it does not cause such severe burning, has a greater effect on the system as a whole. In either case the first aid treatment for shock is artificial respiration, carried out in the same manner as for drowning. If the person affected remains in contact with live metal and the current cannot at once be switched off, there is danger of shock to those who attempt to remove him, and they must protect themselves with some non-conducting material. It is impossible to state exactly what are, or are not, dangerous conditions because the general health and physical condition play an important part.

The general method of constructing switchboards is to fix a framework of angle, or channel, iron at the determined position, and to bolt to it panels of enamelled slate or "Sindanyo," which is a patent compound, resembling vulcanite in appearance, and lighter and more easily drilled and worked than slate. It is, however, liable, under adverse conditions of heat and moisture (such as when stored), to warp slightly, but with the normal conditions under which switchboards are used it is highly satisfactory and has largely replaced slate during recent years. There is little or no difference in the overall cost of switchboards for which either of these materials is used. The principal risks with slate are the possibilities of metallic veins, with consequent current leakage and poor insulation tests. These risks are overcome to some extent by fitting fibre bushes to the holes through which current-carrying metal passes.

The slate or "Sindanyo" panel is drilled for fixing the fuses and switches in the proper order. Opinion on the best method of arranging the circuits that control one piece of apparatus varies. Some prefer the switches to be together irrespective of the colours of the circuits that they control; others prefer them grouped according to

in line with them, the fuse on one pole above the switch, and that on the other pole below it. If there is not space on the board to enable this arrangement to be carried out, the "negative" fuses may be grouped together and mounted at the bottom or at the back of the board. Fuse wire of such a size that it will blow at 50 per cent

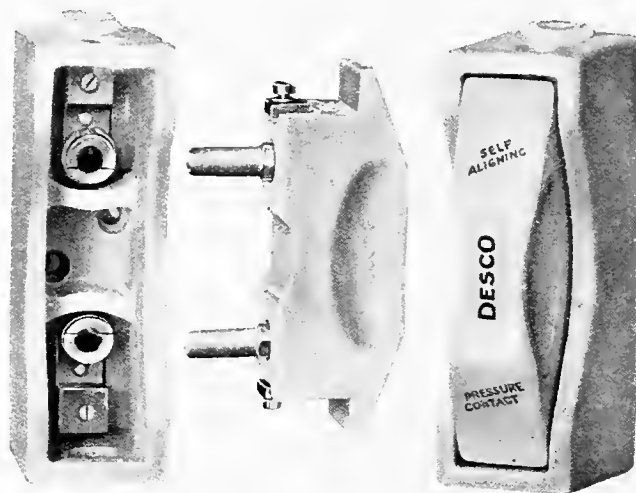


FIG. 42

G. P. Dennis, Ltd.

colours, with the result that for each piece of apparatus having, say, four colour circuits, there are four switches, widely separated on the panel. Under the conditions that exist in the professional theatre the latter is considered to be the more convenient arrangement. In Repertory and "Little" theatres the former method is often used. There is general agreement on the desirable arrangement of the switches in a common-sense way. Thus switches in the top row may control the down stage lights, the switches in the next row the lights for the main acting area, and the bottom row those for the backcloth or cyclorama lighting. As far as possible, the order of switches from left to right should follow the order of the lamps they control from the stage left (actor's left hand) to stage right. To avoid confusion and to ensure the quick repair of fuses in case of a "blow" during the progress of a scene, these should be mounted in the same order as the switches and

greater load than the circuit is designed to carry for the "positive" side, and at 100 per cent overload on the "negative" side is generally used. This is not strictly in accordance with the Regulations, but is common practice in many theatres. Spare wired fuse bridges should always be kept ready for immediate use. There are many good fuses, all complying with the Home Office and other Regulations, on the market. One that may be preferred is illustrated in Fig. 42. This is a "self-aligning" pattern that ensures good contact, and allows of quick replacement of the bridge. New fuse wire is readily inserted, and the operator's hand is protected if the fuse "blows" when the bridge is inserted into the base.

With circuits up to 12 amperes, standard patterns of tumbler switches can be used. On small boards these, particularly the "all insulate" pattern, which renders risk of shock to the operator negligible, are to be preferred.



## CRASHES

By A. E. PETERSON

*Founder, Sunday Night Adventurers; Secretary, Kingston Marionette Players, etc.*

AT the end of Ibsen's play *The Doll's House* the catastrophic clash of the downstairs door shatters for ever Torvald Helmer's chance of happiness. In the last few seconds of the final scene Torvald hopes that a miracle will take place, and that Nora, his wife, will return to him, but his hopes are shattered as "From below is heard the reverberation of a heavy door closing," and almost before the audience has had time to grasp the significance of the sound, the curtains begin to close and the play is ended.

What must have been the feelings of the audience who witnessed the first public performance? What single stage effect is so devastating? Yet this terrific effect would be no more than the noise of a heavy plank of wood, or some other weighty object, dropped on to the stage by an unknown stage hand, probably impatient at being kept from his supper by having to provide this solitary and simple effect. Some years after the play had been produced, Ibsen admitted that it was almost for the sake of the last scene alone that the play was written, and it is not generally known that there is an alternative ending to the play in which Nora recognizes the claims of children, husband, and home, and the play ends on a note of reconciliation. This alteration was made to make the play palatable to German audiences, which in those days refused to tolerate the idea of a woman throwing convention to the winds and boldly deciding her own future life.

If there is a real door near the stage that can be closed with a loud clash it is possible that this noise may be suitable for "effects" purposes, but, as a rule, actual doors are seldom met with, and even if one is convenient the noise it makes in closing, no matter how vigorously it is banged, is usually so poor that the audience, instead of appreciating the realism of the effect, is likely to believe the noise to be an effect carelessly arranged and nonchalantly carried out.

Generally speaking, an effect should be toned down rather than exaggerated, but in the case

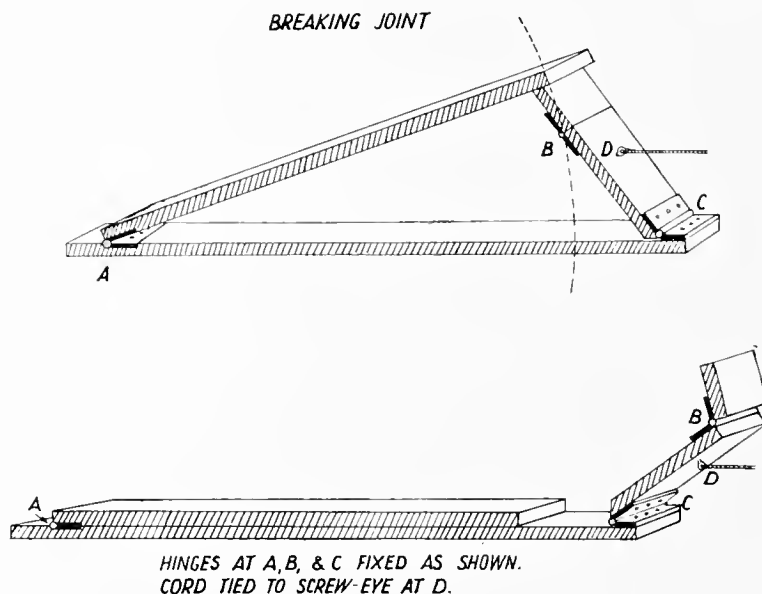
of a door clashing, especially when the noise is an important factor in the development of the plot of the play, it is wiser to overdo the effect rather than to run the risk of some members of the audience missing the effect altogether.

A simple alternative to the use of a real door is to drop a short, heavy plank of wood, such as is used by builders for scaffolding, and to make the noise at such a distance from the stage as the particular circumstances of the occasion demand. It may be arranged by placing one end of the plank against the wall and raising the other end to whatever height is necessary to suggest the noise of a door closing when the end is dropped. The sound may be intensified if a foot is pressed on the plank as it falls. If there is no wall handy, a heavy plank, four or five feet long, may be allowed to fall from a perpendicular position, being helped by the operator's foot. Care should be taken to prevent the plank bouncing after it has fallen. If the door that is to be heard closing is a long way off, a soft thud is all that is necessary, in which case the plank may be suitably padded or allowed to fall on a piece of carpet.

On a small stage, where there is little space to work and where it is essential to employ an effect of this description, it is possible, by using a simple piece of apparatus, to overcome any difficulties that may arise. The accompanying illustrations show how this may be done. The hinges at *A* and *C* may be replaced by wooden stops, and the "breaking joint" may be made of wood an inch and a half or two inches square. The joint is operated by a cord fastened to it just below the hinge. If the hinge *C* is replaced by a stop, the cord *D* should be pulled so that the wooden breaking joint does not fall on to the stage and make a clatter. When the apparatus has been set, the breaking cord *D* can be led to the place from where it is desired to operate it, and by arranging it to run over a pulley wheel all risk of clatter can be avoided. In constructing such a piece of apparatus, it is absolutely necessary that

the position of the hinge *B* should be outside the dotted line of the arc shown on the illustration; otherwise the apparatus will not work satisfactorily. If the apparatus is properly constructed by a skilled workman, it should, when once it is "set," easily bear the weight of a man, yet be so delicately balanced that the slightest pull on the

bottom, a heavy hammer, and a strong arm, or may be made by placing lengths of thin match-boarding between two upturned boxes and breaking them. If it is necessary for the audience to see the breaking down of a door, a panel of thin wood is fitted into the framework of a door that is substantially built. The preliminary blows



cord should be sufficient to cause the supported plank to fall. If there is a tendency for the upper portion of the breaking joint to slip down when placed in position, this may be overcome by fixing a narrow strip of wood to the underside of the upper plank, or by inserting a screw the head of which is left protruding about half an inch. If this is done, the bottom plank should have a corresponding groove into which the retaining strip will easily fit, or a hole deep enough to accommodate the head of the screw when the plank has fallen. It is, of course, a simple matter to support a plank upon an unbroken strut, but frequently the weight is such that considerable force is required to release it, and when the success of an effect of this description depends upon a cue word or perfect timing, the importance of a reliable piece of apparatus need not be stressed.

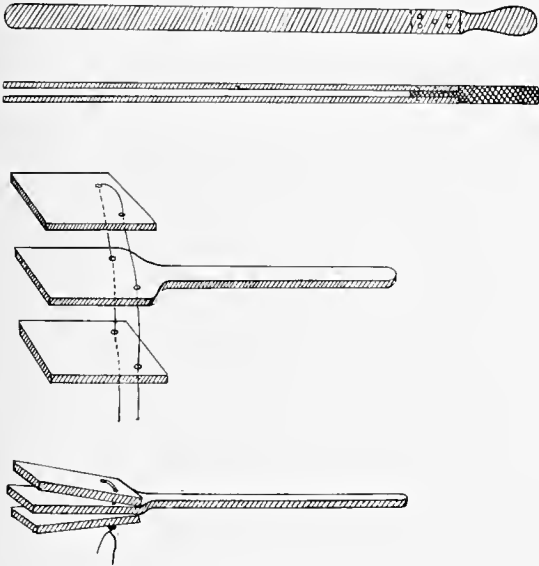
The noise of a door that is being broken down, if the effect has not to be seen by the audience, may be supplied by a wooden box with a thin

should be struck on the stage, and the first cracks, as the door is giving way, should be made by breaking thin wood laths. To support the illusion every time a heavy blow is dealt the door should be vibrated and the panel that is to be broken should be prepared beforehand by cutting or sawing through it in suitable places.

The sound of breaking glass is made by dropping a large glass bottle or jar on to a piece of paving stone or a couple of bricks placed in the bottom of a basket or box to prevent as far as possible the broken glass spreading. The noise of glass dropping on a pavement from a height can be made by suspending an empty wine bottle by a string fastened to a nail high up in the rear wall and by allowing the bottle to swing well before it smashes on the wall at the back close to the floor.

A fishmonger's bass filled with broken glass and dropped on the stage suggests the sound of a window being broken, or the bass may be suspended and struck with a heavy stick. The

continuous crash of glass one hears as someone falls through the roof of a conservatory, is made by having a couple of zinc buckets, one three-quarters full of broken glass, and by emptying the contents from one bucket into the other as often as is required, as much noise as possible being made in the process.



SLAP STICKS

If there is an objection to the use of broken glass, the noise can be suggested by dropping small sheets of thin metal, four or five inches square, on to a marble slab or a similar material. The sheets of metal may be loosely fastened together by a wire threaded through a hole bored through them at each corner.

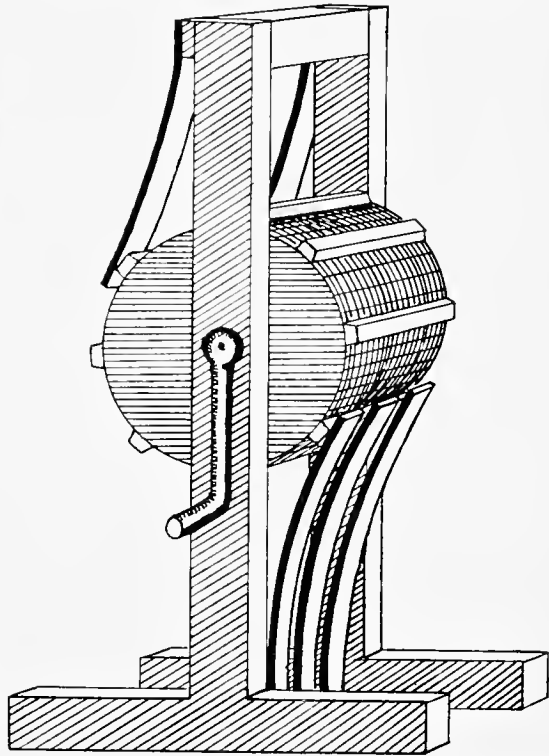
The sharp metallic click a cabin door makes on being closed, or the noise of a motor-car door being slammed, can be made by the lid of a tin trunk or portmanteau being violently shut, or two metal surfaces clapped together will give a satisfactory suggestion of the noise.

The heavy bumping and crashing noise that accompanies a fall downstairs is made by loosely tying together a bundle of stage braces or a dozen brass stair rods, and dropping them repeatedly on the floor of the stage.

Ornaments, clocks, and similar articles may be made to fall from a shelf or the mantelpiece by having a black thread attached to them, and

being pulled off from the wings. If this is impracticable they may be poked off by means of a wire worked from behind the scene.

Much noise can be made by using one of the large clappers that are popular with football fans. A more simple instrument is a long wooden clapper with loose tongues, as shown in the



CRASH MACHINE

illustration. The old fashioned slap stick retains its usefulness. In the hands of the clown, it caused much distress to dear old pantaloons, who was always in trouble, and when the stick was loaded with small percussion caps, which exploded with a generous display of sparks and much noise whenever anyone was struck with it, the joy of the juveniles who were watching an old time harlequinade found expression in shrill yells of delight. Alas the harlequinade is no more. The stick was made of two long pieces of thin, pliable wood, about three feet long and two inches wide. A wooden handle fastened between the long slats was of a thickness that allowed the slats to meet

with a loud clap when anyone was struck with it, and quite a gentle tap caused a sharp sounding noise. This stick must not be confused with harlequin's wand or magic bat, which was sometimes made of long flat strips of whalebone covered with black silk and finished off at the end with a broad tassel with which harlequin used to tickle the ears of the clown, and for which the pantaloons received many an undeserved crack over the head.

To suggest the noise of an aeroplane crashing or the crash of timber as ships collide, a more complicated piece of mechanism than any of the effects that have already been described is necessary. The apparatus is similar to that used to

suggest the sound of continuous machine gun fire, but is built on a much larger scale. The framework should be of stout material, six feet high, four feet wide, and a foot deep. The roller, fitted in the centre of the frame, rotates between two rows of slats, which are fitted to the ends and opposite sides of the frame, and engage the paddles of the roller when it is turned. The slats are sprung to the roller under pressure, and are so arranged that when the machine is in action the crashes are continuous. Supported by the noise supplied by a really good thunder sheet, the enormous volume of sound produced should be sufficient to meet whatever demands may be made for sound effects, no matter how unusual they may be.

## THE DRESS REHEARSAL

By DUMAYNE WARNE

*Author (with Phil Forsyth) of "The House," "The Ultimate Review," "Second Thoughts," etc.*

TO the society with its own theatre, and which can, therefore, rehearse in conditions almost exactly similar to those in which the performances will be given, the dress rehearsal is not formidable. It is merely a final run-through to see that everything is absolutely in order before the opening night.

Unfortunately, there are not many such societies. Some are lucky enough to secure the use of the stage, without scenery or furniture, for the last few rehearsals; others, which make their own costumes, are able to try them out in their ordinary rehearsal room. But to most of them, unhappily, the dress rehearsal is the first and only time at which a number of the most important parts of the production are assembled. This fact, incidentally, accounts for a good deal of the roughness of many amateur performances, and, while it is much to be regretted, there seems to be no way of overcoming the difficulty.

The few that have their own theatre, or one that they can use as their own, are, almost without exception, dramatic, as distinct from operatic, societies. Their performances, as a rule, reach a high level. These notes, which are of no use to them, are intended for the consideration of an operatic society that has only one rehearsal on the stage, and the members of which have their one and only opportunity, at this rehearsal, to practise with the scenery, costumes, and properties.

A few words must be said at the beginning on the old saw: "A bad dress rehearsal means a good show," and vice versa. Of course, this is not really so, but it refers to a psychological truth of such importance that it cannot be passed over without explanation.

That a bad dress rehearsal is necessary to ensure a good opening performance is nonsense. What is necessary is that the dress rehearsal should be sufficiently disturbing to keep the company alert on the next evening, rather than that they should

go home, after a comfortable and encouraging rehearsal, to return on the following night stale and over-confident, to give a flat and lifeless performance.

The effect of the audience on a production is great, and things *do* tend "to be all right on the night" owing to their influence—but only within reason. The tendency for things to go right is much fostered if the company are just a little anxious, rather than if they are over-confident.

Some producers, if they feel sure that their companies are capable of good performances, deliberately address them in a most discouraging manner at the fall of the curtain after a smooth dress rehearsal, with the object of keeping them alert for the morrow.

However, it is extremely improbable that the dress rehearsal will pass off so easily that everybody will be lulled into a false sense of security. It is much more likely to be so upsetting and disturbing that the company will go home overtired and depressed, and thus endanger the production for the opposite reason. Since any tendency to over-confidence can be cured by the producer, it is more important to consider how every possible precaution may be taken to prevent the dress rehearsal becoming depressing and exhausting.

The difficulties that are likely to arise are of two kinds: mechanical and mental, so to speak. Of these, the mechanical may have a serious effect on the mental.

To ordinary amateurs, the dress rehearsal is most stirring. Probably the majority of them penetrate behind the scenes in a theatre only occasionally. This experience itself becomes a matter of great interest. Then there is the thrill of dressing-up and making-up, to say nothing of the nervousness concerning their own particular part in the production. It is no wonder, then, that behind the curtain at the dress rehearsal there is a feeling of suppressed (sometimes not well suppressed)

excitement, which may affect the most phlegmatic individual. There will be a certain number of temperamental members who will, for one reason or another, be ready to become obtrusive on slight pretext, and others who will have the unfortunate knack of irritating them unconsciously, or perhaps even consciously. Add to this the jealousies and petty conceits of all ordinary people, and it will be understood that the producer of an amateur operatic company has under his control a group of players in a highly emotional condition. This condition may express itself in rages, tears, etc., which will seriously impair the usefulness of the rehearsal unless considerable pains are taken to see that these emotions are not stirred up in the wrong way.

But the producer is too much occupied to have leisure for mothering the cast. He must rely on his staff to do this, and one of the most important qualifications for the producer's assistants is that they should be not only experienced in calming the excitable but also in realizing that trouble is brewing.

#### MECHANICAL DIFFICULTIES

Mechanical difficulties may affect the mental composure of the company. The reason is that the effect of a breakdown in the mechanical department, namely, scenery, lighting, etc., on a group of people in the mental condition that has been described may make them so lose control of themselves that they are quite incapable of rehearsing.

But with the society that has only one day to get everything ready for "The Night," it is extremely unlikely that all will be carried through without a hitch, more or less serious, taking place. Such a hitch will probably be beyond the power of the producer or his staff to avert, and he or they may be in no way responsible for what occurs.

It is necessary, therefore, to consider, firstly, how the danger of mechanical mishap may be minimized, and, secondly, how to keep the company in a good temper if anything should happen. Perhaps it will be better to discuss these points in the reverse order, and to decide, first, how to keep the company in a good temper, and then to examine the more technical matter of avoiding a mechanical breakdown.

The first thing is to be polite to the company. This is, of course, part of the stock-in-trade of a competent producer who hopes for a re-engagement. But he is not the only person with whom the cast come into contact during the last evening of rehearsal. There are the Musical Director, the Stage Manager and his Assistants, the Property Master, the Wardrobe Mistress, and the Makers-up. Any of these can, by an injudicious word or action, cause an upset that may lead to a number of frayed tempers. The amateur assistants to the producer in many societies seem to think it necessary to adopt a bullying manner while carrying out their duties. There appears to be no real necessity for this, and committees would be much better served by members who are less likely to cause unrest behind the scenes.

Another way to avoid putting too much strain on the patience of the company is to see that when there is a delay they are not kept unnecessarily on the stage, unable to go away, and yet doing nothing useful. If a long delay is obviously about to occur, it is better to tell the company to break, and to call them for a fixed time later on, in order to enable them to find entertainment for themselves in the meanwhile, rather than to expect them to stand about the stage, wondering why the rehearsal does not continue and afraid to go away lest they should miss their cues.

#### SEEING THE PERFORMANCE

During the dress rehearsal the company should be allowed to see as much of the performance as possible from the auditorium, partly because they are useful as an audience, and partly because, having seen the performance at the dress rehearsal, there is less excuse for them to loiter in the wings on the nights of the production.

Care should be taken to ensure that they do not become so absorbed in the play that they miss their cues. This common occurrence is most annoying, and if it happens often may have the effect of causing the producer to become irritable to the cast and to the call-boy.

Another thing necessary to keep the company contented and capable of doing their work properly, i.e. concentrating, during a long and tiring dress rehearsal, is that they should be adequately fed. This does not mean that it is essential to serve a five-course dinner on the stage during the

evening. It means that a player who has arrived straight from his (or her) office cannot be expected to rehearse until midnight with nothing to eat or drink but half a sandwich and a little lukewarm coffee taken in the wings.

The periods during which scenery is being changed, or when something has gone wrong and a delay occurs, should be used to enable some section of the company, the technical staff or even the stage-crew, to break off and to secure refreshments. This course of action makes it easier for everyone concerned to get through a difficult dress rehearsal without loss of temper.

Its influence is, of course, also reflected in the performance the next day, because the company have gone home tired, but not exhausted, have probably slept well, and returned refreshed and eager.

Arrangements can almost always be made with the theatre or hall for the provision of refreshments for the cast. Failing this, a buffet can be organized by the society, which, if it is efficiently conducted, can easily be made a source of revenue.

In the unlikely event of it being impossible to arrange anything of the kind, members should be instructed to bring sandwiches, etc.

Nothing has yet been said about the main business of testing that all is ready for the production, but it must be remembered that we are primarily concerned with amateurs, and that it is probably better to pander to their frailties rather than to risk driving any player beyond the limits of endurance.

#### THE WORK AT THE THEATRE

Now to outline what has to be done at the theatre during the day of the dress rehearsal, so that the performance on the following night may proceed smoothly. It should be borne in mind that it is assumed the society has the use of the theatre for the purpose on one day only.

Briefly, the scheme should be to arrange the scenery, properties, and lighting, and to unpack the costumes so that when the company arrives in the evening all that they have to do is to dress, make-up, and then go straight through the play. But, unfortunately, this is rarely practicable. Something invariably occurs, however careful the precautions which have been taken, which has the effect of upsetting the day's programme.

As examples of the sort of misadventures that cause delays may be mentioned—

(a) The scenery does not arrive at the expected time.

(b) The scenery requires so much alteration that several hours' carpentry are necessary before it can be set.

N.B. Little else can be done on the stage until the scenery has been set.

(c) The lighting demanded by the producer requires special wiring which takes a long time to carry out, and which cannot be started until after the scene has been fitted up.

#### THE STAGE PICTURE

Even if none of these eventualities takes place, or no accident, such as something suddenly breaking, occurs, the rehearsal may take a long time, as the dress rehearsal is the only chance that the producer has of fitting his production on to the stage. He will, of course, have in his mind a complete picture of how he wishes it to appear, but this is his only opportunity of making the necessary adjustments to carry into effect what he has in his mind.

If he is wise, he will have measured the size of the stage on which the play is to be presented, so that he will have been enabled to arrange all the movements in such a manner that they will fit. But there is another aspect of production that cannot very well be rehearsed beforehand. This is colour; and it is expressed in the costumes, scenery, make-up, and lighting. Therefore it may be necessary for the producer to interrupt in order to repeat a good deal, not on account of the movements or the lines, which should be accurate by this time (though there may be mistakes due to nervousness, etc.), but in order correctly to adjust the stage picture.

Too much stress cannot be laid upon the importance of the visual effect of the production on the audience. The colourings will have been carefully worked out in advance, and the producer will have imagined the effect of his groupings in the production of a balanced picture. At the dress rehearsal he must be given the opportunity of fitting that picture into its frame. He must be allowed constantly to stop the rehearsal in order slightly to alter a movement, not because the movement of itself is incorrect, but in order

better to weld it into the setting, and so to secure a better balance to the whole scene.

Stage lighting has a big influence on the appearance of most fabrics. It alters them in various ways, the result being that a scheme which seemed to be quite satisfactory when the materials were in the show-room may be most unsuitable under the stage lights. It will be necessary, then, for the producer to rearrange the lighting so that he may see the effect of his alterations as he goes along. This means that the company must wait while gelatines are changed and other mechanical adjustments are made.

He may minimize the necessity for such interruptions by having, if there is time, a complete lighting rehearsal before the company arrive. At the lighting rehearsal he may have some of the costumes that are to be used in the play carried about on the stage to enable him to test the effect of his lighting arrangements on the materials.

Some producers hold a dress parade before they begin to rehearse each act. This procedure may sometimes save a delay while an obvious adjustment is made, but the dress rehearsal is really intended to test the whole effect of the costumes in their proper places and under the actual lighting that will be used rather than to examine each dress by itself. Such an examination is more properly the duty of the wardrobe mistress. In any case, it may be done on another day if the dresses can be secured in time.

It is, however, important that the company should be made-up for the dress rehearsal as they would have to be for the performance. This is sometimes omitted by producers as being unneces-

sary, but it should be done, partly because some of the make-ups may be wrong, and partly because each member of the company should be familiar with the appearance of the others. Make-up is also affected by the lighting.

There is one other question to which reference must be made before leaving the subject of the dress rehearsal: whether or not an audience should be permitted. The policy of the society must decide it. Some societies treat the dress rehearsal just as a performance, and invite nurses from local hospitals, etc., to witness it. Others permit no one to enter the theatre who is not connected with the production. That an audience can be of assistance is undeniable. They tell the company how the performance is going, and give indications as to where it will be necessary to wait for laughs, and also where encores may be expected. Whatever course is decided upon, one thing is important—the producer must be allowed to stop the dress rehearsal, whether there is an audience or not, in order to make essential adjustments. Failing this, some other provision must be made to give him the opportunity to see that the production is in a condition which he considers to be satisfactory before it, and his reputation with it, are shown to the public.

When the dress rehearsal is over it is usual for the producer to pronounce a sort of valediction to the company before they leave the theatre. Nothing that he can say will have the effect of appreciably improving the production; therefore he is well advised to give the company as much encouragement as he can, as do the best generals before sending their men into battle.



## GILBERT'S AUNT SALLIES

By D. GRAHAM DAVIS

Editor of "The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal"

IF Gilbert is accused for not having made his younger women characters bear any resemblance to real life, he is often criticized for too much naturalness in his elderly females. He has been pilloried for his habit of holding up to derision women who are growing old and losing their beauty. The critics profess disgust at Gilbert's insistence on the physical odiousness of a woman growing old. While admitting that this is not a pleasant trait from which to attempt to draw laughter, are we not overlooking the manner in which the theme is handled? Analysed in the cold light of reasoned afterthoughts, it is by no means creditable for Gilbert so persistently to have "guyed" the lady of uncertain age and charms. But this has been piloted successfully through all the operas (it is true that in *Trial by Jury* the theme is only introduced, not actually depicted), and this must mean either that the idea is acceptable to the audience or that it is treated so delicately that the cruelty is masked, when we actually hear it, by the underlying satire. And, surely, it is at such a time that one must judge a situation intended primarily for the stage.

Nevertheless, one would strongly advise that this aspect of these magnificent contralto roles be not stressed or treated too seriously. We do not want this unpleasant trait, this frustrated femininity, to be either too comic or too tragic. Nor will it avail the actress to try to present these parts on sympathetic lines; to do so would be to spoil both the effectiveness and the intention.

None of these parts should be played without a realization of the underlying humour, whether this be of the savage kind or of a gentler nature—Lady Jane's matrimonial ambitions or the Queen of the Fairies' "reactions" to Private Willis. The humour is akin to that of the male comedy parts, and should be treated in the same unforced manner. But there is this difference: the male parts are in themselves humorous, the conception of the contralto roles is that of serious parts that become humorous in realization. The

comedy, which is abundant, rarely comes to the surface in the characterization. A useful asset to the amateur contralto is an imposing presence and forceful personality. Even more important is the possession of a keen sense of humour, so that the actress can realize, without openly displaying, the wealth of "fun" that the author intended to be got from the parts. The audience must never get an inkling that the actress is other than in dead earnest. This advice should be remembered during the usual brief study of the contralto parts that follows. Particularly does it apply in the parts of Lady Jane, Dame Carruthers, and the Duchess of Plaza-Toro.

LADY SANGAZURE (*The Sorcerer*) remains the grandest of *grandes dames*, even when, to the audience, her behaviour is the most outrageous. Throughout the opera there must be the impression of the aristocratic matron and dragon of the proprieties. This last aspect does not even disappear when she is flinging herself at the reluctant Mr. Wells, for her actions are unconsciously inspired by the potion. There is, in the last-mentioned and many other scenes, plenty of humour within the part that will require no assistance from any outward tricks of the comedienne's art. The part should not be made too domineering; undoubtedly Lady Sangazure does, by her personality, tower above the villagers, but this should not be too naturally overwhelming a dominance. Lady Sangazure is one of those tactless dowagers whose greatest asset is the power of saying the wrong thing in the wrong place—as witness her remarks to Aline when she makes her first appearance.

LITTLE BUTTERCUP (*H.M.S. Pinafore*)—how many would recognize her by the name of Mrs. Cripps?—is best described in the Boatswain's words as "the rosiest, the roundest, and the reddest beauty in all Spithead." A hail-fellow-well-met attitude towards all is the dominant key-note of the first act. This is coupled with a determination to stand no nonsense from anybody.

In the second act, particularly in the opening scene, an inkling must be given that there is something mysterious in Buttercup's mind. This must not be shown to such an extent as to lessen



Photo by J. W. Debenham

THE PIRATE MAID-OF-ALL-WORK  
Ruth, the first of Gilbert's "faded amorists"

the effect of the revelation at the end of the opera. Here Buttercup's attitude towards Sir Joseph, incidentally, is no less hearty than it is to the sailors; a fact which in no way upsets that pompous bureaucrat's equanimity: a tribute, this, to Buttercup's personality.

There is a strange paradox about this part. The dominance of many of the contralto parts comes from the physique of the player. In the case of Buttercup it is due more to her manner. Yet this part, more than any other in the group, calls for a "plump and pleasing person." This sometimes presents difficulties, as it is not the easiest task to make a *petite* contralto, even when aided by the mysteries of make-up, realize that description. A small Katisha, Ruth, or even a slim Lady Jane, may "get away with it" through sheer force of personality. Rarely will a portrayal of Buttercup, in similar circumstances, be successful. The golden rule is that as the physique may shrink from the ideal, so must the force of character and personality increase to give a convincing portrayal of this rollicking, yet mysterious, woman.

RUTH (*The Pirates of Penzance*) ushers in that long, and pathetic, line of middle-aged or elderly women whose plainness, increasing years, and matrimonial ambitions are held up to ridicule. Ruth is a rather flamboyant, gipsy type, not unlike Little Buttercup, though she lacks the bum-boat woman's cheeriness. Traditionally, Ruth should be a big woman, but, in this case, the reverse will not really detract from the part's effectiveness. A straight, emphatic style is more desirable than any play upon the emotions. The part is not without humour; here again no emphasis from the stage will help in the slightest. When we first see her, Ruth is in penitent mood. It is only towards Frederic that she is at all gentle. To the pirates she is masterful and a match for any one of them. There is little doubt that they are in mortal dread of this "bossing" maid-of-all-work.

THE LADY JANE (*Patience*), perhaps the cruellest of Gilbert's satires, is drawn as a caricature, which the actress should transform into a finished picture. Jane is put on the stage, majestic and statuesque, to be laughed at. In its effect, her devotion to Bunthorne is more comic than touching. She will never desert him, she swears, yet when the chance of becoming Duchess of Dunstable appears, Jane seizes it (and the Duke) with both hands. Examples such as this, though miith-provoking in the extreme, must be played without any conscious showing of the comic effect. It is here that that sense of humour, to which I

referred earlier, will be so useful. Even the preposterous self-accompanied recitative at the opening of the second act will be the funnier for absolutely serious handling. The duet, later in this act, with Bunthorne does, of course, call to some extent for broader treatment.

THE QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES (*Iolanthe*) is another majestic person of, if possible, Junoesque proportions. The very words put into her mouth make it important that these qualifications go with the necessary vocal and dramatic talents. If the contraltos in a society tend towards slimness, then, all else being equal, the Queen should go to the tallest, for her position picks her out as one who should (in all senses) dominate the fairies. Charm and graciousness should be added to the characterization, which otherwise would tend to be too severe. This will also help in the comedy scenes in which the Queen takes part. But where there is severity, tending to frigidity, is in the Queen's attitude towards the peers, whom, until the finale, she regards as beneath contempt. It is as well to remember that the fairies regard her as their mother as well as their queen.

LADY BLANCHE (*Princess Ida*), although on quieter lines than Lady Jane and others, is yet another schemer. In this case it is power, not matrimony, which is the ambition. The part is made most convincing when no emphasis is laid on the coldly-calculating side of her nature. As Blanche conceals this from the students, so should the actress hide it from the audience. The lines of the part will say all that is needful. Blanche shows that she is convinced that her dreams will come true, and the audience realizes that she will be well qualified to assume power when the opportunity occurs. There is a hint, too, as in her acceptance of Melissa's "harmless scheme," that Blanche is entirely human beneath her cold and stoical exterior. The actress should endeavour to give a picture of a commanding, masterful personality rather than one of hope deferred.

KATISHA (*The Mikado*) gives us at once the most repulsive and most human of the contralto roles. This is a character giving scope for dramatic acting of the highest order. There is plenty of pathos, too, in the part, both apparent, as in the second act solo, "Alone and yet Alive," and concealed, as in the remarks of the other characters about her appearance. But the actress

must be warned against using these opportunities for enlisting the sympathy of the audience. All that comes to her, one has to feel, is richly deserved. Unlike so many of Gilbert's women characters, Katisha repays a close study of the character depicted. Here is a dominating personality; by sheer force of character, and against



Photo by J. W. Debenham

Adored by the villagers of Rederring, Dame Hannah makes a pleasant contrast to the scheming contraltos of the other operas

her unattractive appearance, she has obtained a station high in the Imperial Court. She has colossal courage and self-assurance, and can even divert, openly, homage from the Mikado to herself. She feels Nanki-Poo's desertion as an affront; it is her *amour propre*, not her ambition, which suffers most. For, when she upbraids him, it is in the words "this *insult* you shall rue." And this is the woman who is won over by Ko-Ko's artless tale of the broken hearted tom-tit! So we see that she is quite human after all. Many of the observations I have just given are based on a fascinating study of Katisha that was published in *The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal* during 1932. I am grateful to the writer, Miss Audrey

Williamson, for permission to make use of her sound analysis (the only satisfactory one I have read) of this wonderful woman character.

The uglier Katisha appears to be, the better is the effect. It is not everyone who cares to don an unattractive make-up, and there is endless precedent to support such an objection. In an opera where, with this one exception, all the women-folk are young and attractive, the contrast and general appearance of severity and old age make a picture the further ugliness of which may, to some extent, be left to the imagination.

DAME HANNAH (*Ruddigore*) is a more pleasant character than the others in this group. To her falls much of the sympathy that is denied to the other contralto roles. Hannah is a kindly old soul, gentle, strong-willed, and strong-minded. These last two traits override the first when she is roused. Then, indeed, she merits the description, "a tiger cat," that is applied to her. But it is her solicitude for Rose and her devotion to her dead lover that endear her to us. The burlesque spirit of the opera is not noticeable in the part, which should be played on quite straight lines. For that reason alone one would deprecate the practice, not altogether unsupported by professional precedent, for amateur Hannahs to play for a laugh on the name "Roddy-Doddy" when confronted by Sir Roderic in Act II. To do so seems to strike a false note, and a spontaneous exclamation of wondering awe and affection is far preferable.

DAME CARRUTHERS (*The Yeomen of the Guard*) gives us the incarnation of the level-headed sentimentalist who takes herself and her job seriously. She, too, is a husband hunter, but she does not pursue Meryll in the open manner that Lady Jane uses to run after Bunthorne. In conception and execution, the Dame's scheme is more subtle. As with most of the other contralto roles, the Dame needs to be played with an air of authority. She is, above all, a domineering sort of person, despite that strain of sentimentality, and more than a bit of a busybody.

The proposal scene in the second act must be played on rather broader lines than the rest of the part. Although the advice to Meryll is to appear to be in grim earnest, Dame Carruthers should

bring a slight emphasis to the melodramatic quality of the scene—which is different from any other aspect of the role. During the old soldier's halting proposal, the exultant attitude of the discovery of the "plot" turns to one of coyness, almost, but not quite, verging on the "kitten-ish." If taken on these lines the whole scene is intensely amusing, and not out of keeping with the dramatic development of the tragic climax towards which the opera is leading. One is assuming that the duet, "Rapture, Rapture," is to be omitted, as is now usual. Should, however, this number be retained (a course that I cannot too strongly condemn), then it is suggested that the preceding scene be taken as a little cameo of straightforward acting.

THE DUCHESS OF PLAZA-TORO (*The Gondoliers*) is a dignified matron, who keeps a tight hand upon her husband and makes it quite clear that she not only is, but intends to remain, the predominant partner. The humour is rather more obvious than in several of the previous parts, but is of a somewhat sardonic nature—that of the overbearing woman who, while not actually a nagging wife, has at least a hen-pecked husband. In the outward appearance of the character there is not a little wistfulness. Especially in the first act, one feels that the Duchess is making a gallant struggle against difficulties to preserve appearances and to keep up the dignity of the title. In the second act, when the success of the Duke of Plaza-Toro, Limited, has brought prosperity to the impoverished couple, she becomes more gracious, but even then cannot resist the temptation of getting in a few digs at the expense of her volatile husband. There is nothing flamboyant or comic required in the acting; her masterfulness is subtle. Grace and dignity are needed both in speech and movement. Above all, the Duchess should be a good "feeder," with a sound knowledge of team work, for much of the humour of the ducal party depends on a well-matched Duke and Duchess who will play up to one another in a capable and understanding manner. The Duchess is not hard or cynical; there is a smile hovering not far away, even when she is scoring an effect at the expense of her spouse.

## OPERA—CABARET—COMPETITIONS

By PHILIP J. S. RICHARDSON

Editor, "The Dancing Times"

IN many of the well known operas, such as *Faust*, *Carmen*, and *Aida*, there are ballets, and from time to time when these operas are given someone is called upon to arrange the dances. This is not quite such a straightforward or easy matter as it may appear to be, and a considerable amount of historical knowledge is wanted. For if, as is usually the case, the opera is presented on the old familiar lines, it is essential that the ballet should follow the style that is traditionally associated with that particular opera.

When the Royal Opera Syndicate, in 1933, entrusted the production of the ballet in *Faust* to the Association of Operatic Dancing, that Association, although it numbers several well-known choreographers amongst its members, preferred to send to the Paris Opera for M. Leo Staats so that it might have the choreography traditionally associated with that particular opera.

Producers who are called upon to arrange any dance that may have to be included in some "straight" play—such, for instance, as the "Minuet" in *School for Scandal*, must always be careful that their arrangement is in full accord with the period of the play. In a London production of a musical play—not a musical comedy—of which the period was about one hundred years ago, a dancer was made to execute a ballet dance with *modern arm movements* such as one saw in some of the later Diaghileff productions. If, on the other hand, the musical play is a musical comedy historical accuracy, though desirable, if possible, is not essential.

In such plays as *The Mikado*, *The Geisha*, and *San Toy*, where there is a certain amount of dancing by Japanese or Chinese characters, accurate national dances of those countries are not expected—the Chinese or Japanese atmosphere should merely be suggested. The same attitude may be safely adopted in the case of all Eastern dances, but when the dances of countries in, say, Western Europe have to be executed they should be correct.

Of these perhaps the most difficult are the dances of Spain. These should always be referred to someone who has an intimate knowledge of Spanish dances; otherwise one runs the danger of seeing, for instance, a classical dance done by a performer in peasant costume or vice versa.

When producing what is popularly known as



Photo by A. & L. Flisob

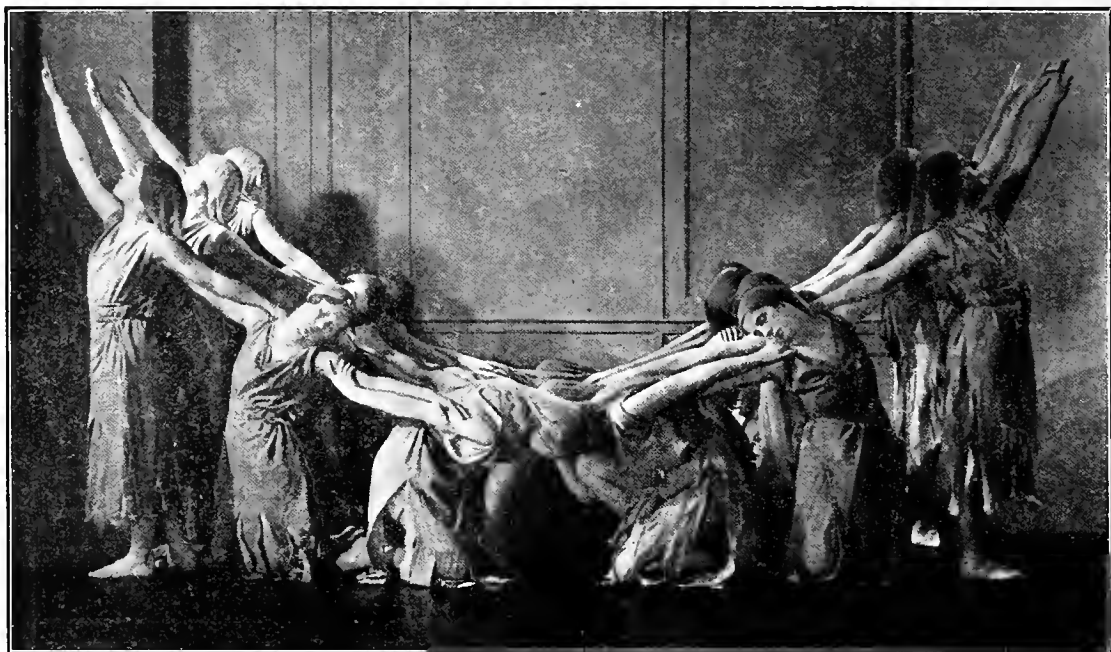
### A CABARET DUET

By Wendy Toye and Fred Franklin at Grosvenor House

a "cabaret" entertainment—that is, a series of short "turns" given as a rule on a ball-room floor, usually rather late in the evening—the producer should bear in mind that his audience only want to be amused in the lightest possible way, and that they do not wish to see dancing that requires a lot of thought on the part of the spectator to understand it properly. A troupe of eight doing ensemble and tap work is the ideal opening number. "Adagio" acts and single turns of an eccentric or contortionist nature are always popular. If there are to be several items, all

should not be dancing turns; some sort of contrast should be introduced. Stage waits must be avoided, and, if the dancing has to be done on a ball-room floor, the shoes of the dancers should be treated with some form of rubber solution to prevent slipping. With certain audiences a straightforward exhibition of modern ball-room

annual Blackpool Dance Festival, held during May, when over a thousand different dances are seen on the stage of the handsome Opera House in that popular resort. In addition, many of the musical festivals and eisteddfods, held all over the country, include a Stage Dancing Section.



*Photo by Peter North*

#### ALL ENGLAND COMPETITION

Pupils of the Ripman School of London win the Group Section

dancing done exceedingly well is welcomed. This also serves to make a happy contrast with other dance turns. On these occasions unless the lighting facilities are exceptional, it is frequently advisable to have "full house lights" and not to attempt to make use of indifferent "spots."

As my subject is theatrical dancing, it is desirable for me to refer to the dances that are presented at numerous theatrical dancing competitions.

The principal one is the "All England Stage Dancing Competition," held during the first three months of each year in aid of the "Sunshine Homes for Blind Babies." It is sometimes referred to as the "Sunshine Competition." Next in importance is the Stage Dancing Section at the

At these competitions the competitors are grouped into classes according to age. The dances are divided according to "Style" into Operatic, Classical (in this instance the term means Greek), National, Character, Demi-character, and Musical Comedy or Cabaret. They are also further divided into Solos, Duets, and Groups.

When arranging a dance for one of these competitions it is essential strictly to carry out the conditions. For instance, in the Operatic section a purely technical "operatic" or ballet dance should be given without any suggestion of character or demi-character work, and in that section usually labelled "Group" and qualified with the statement, "Any style except Cabaret or



TAP WORK

Photo: J. D. A.

The "Eight Step Sisters," whose beats are frequently heard in broadcasts



ENSEMBLE OR TROUPE WORK

The Alfred Haines Dancers showing how all must move alike



Musical Comedy," care should be taken to avoid simultaneous ensemble and tap work that is usually associated with revue or cabaret: the arranger should endeavour to produce a miniature ballet.

Every dance in a competition has a time limit, which varies from a minute and a half to two

competition the adjudicators look for the traditional national dance done to correct music and in a true costume. The national dances of Ireland are, perhaps, the most sinned against in this section. In the jig instead of seeing the true Irish jig one is frequently presented with an elaborate



ALL ENGLAND COMPETITION

Pupils of the Hammond School of Chester win the Cabaret Troupe Section

minutes for solos, and from two to five minutes for duets or groups. This time limit must be strictly adhered to, otherwise disqualification may ensue. Sometimes this limitation involves a "cut" in the music. The "cut" should be made only by someone who thoroughly understands music. To a person with a musical ear it is as bad to make a faulty "cut" in music as it would be to omit a line of poetry from a verse without paying any attention to the sense.

In the "National" section of a stage dancing

dance by a dancer who wears a costume that no Irish dancer ever wore.

It is essential that a dance for a competition should be arranged so that it is well within the powers of the person who will have to execute it. The adjudicators prefer to see simple steps brilliantly done to a number filled with difficult *enchainements* that the performer cannot do.

These Stage Dancing Competitions have been the means of discovering talent that otherwise might never have been noticed,



## THE ACTOR AND HIS AUDIENCE

By CONSUELO M. DE REYES

*Producer, Little Theatre, Citizen House, Bath, and Everyman Theatre, Hampstead; Lecturer in Drama, University College, Exeter*

AN actor in his relationship to his audience will find the maximum expression of his art. In tragedy an actor may find it necessary to withdraw his "player self" from the audience, but in comedy he must take his audience into partnership. A true comedian manages his audience as a good rider manages a high-spirited horse. A comedian will be careful gradually to get on good terms with his audience. If an actor playing an exaggerated character part were to burst on to the stage and to shower the contents of his "bag of tricks" on his audience, he would only succeed in making himself irritating. His comedy business would be regarded as strained and unreal, just because he had not given himself sufficient time to get on good terms with his audience. If, therefore, he kept a hold on himself until the third act, when his relationship with his audience would be fully established and then let himself go, the audience would be ready to laugh at anything he might do. Frequently audiences will accept in the third act what they would resent in the first.

There is an enormous value in sensing an audience, of feeling keenly its mood and response. Here arises the necessity for the actor to keep control over himself and his audience, but this must not be taken to mean that everything must be calculated. The greatest art is often the most instantaneous. A great comedian, such as Sir Harry Lauder, is sure both of his own powers and of his audience, and he is therefore able to play with abandon and enthusiasm and to sweep his audience along with him, but a lesser artist must make sure of his ground.

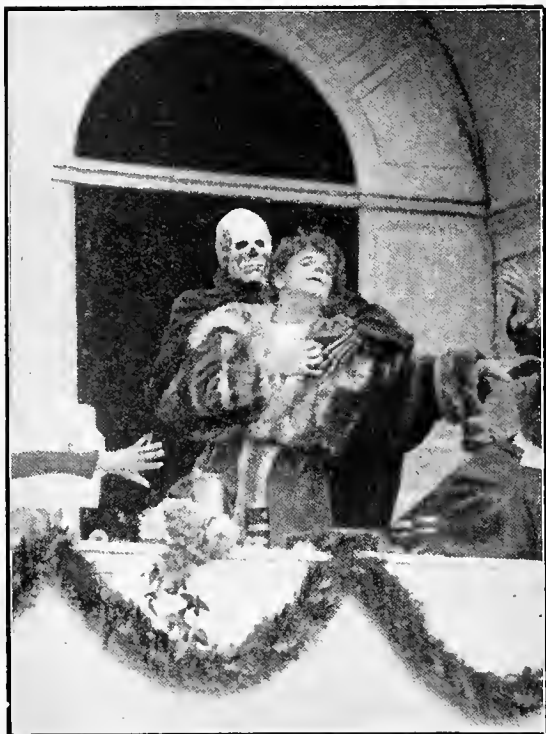
The "timing" of laughs is also an art in which players must be carefully versed. On the amateur stage one far too frequently sees the enjoyment of the audience over a good joke cut short by a too-quick reply, due, of course, to over-anxiety on the part of the player not to "drop" the play. Thus, if the audience laughs at the end of A's speech, B must carefully time his reply. He must

not speak during the laugh, and he must not wait too long for it to finish. He must allow just enough time for the laugh to reach its height, and then judiciously work in his next lines, so that there is no break. The enjoyment of the audience will not need to be cut off abruptly; it must be tapered off through his own speech. If, however, there is no laugh at the end of A's speech as B expects, the latter must guard against an awkward pause. Every player knows that no two audiences are alike, and the joke that draws spontaneous laughter on Monday may not create laughter on Tuesday. If B is not sure whether the laugh will occur, he should begin his reply quietly in an undertone, ready to stop instantly if the laughter begins. If there is no laughter, he can repeat what he has said more loudly.

An example of the necessity for timing laughter occurs in Shaw's *Major Barbara*, where Barbara introduces Bill to her future husband Cusins. The scene ends with Bill saying to Cusins, "You take my tip, mate, stop her jaw, or you'll die afore your time. Wore out, that's what you'll be, wore out." Cusins should reply meditatively: "I wonder." But on the words "wore out" there is invariably a big burst of laughter, and Bill leaves the stage with a round of applause. It is thus impossible for Cusins to speak his line "I wonder" through a storm of laughter. He must wait until it has died down before he can speak; nevertheless he can continue to convey the sense of what he is thinking, and thus preserve the continuity of the scene. If Cusins rubs his chin reflectively while the audience are laughing at Bill, this attitude of pained perplexity will even add to the comedy, and then his words: "I wonder" will come as the culmination of the doubt in his mind. The scene will have remained unbroken, though the audience have laughed as much as they wished.

This is an example of allowing the audience to have their laugh, but there are times when it is far better to kill a laugh in order to get a bigger

one later. The audience are thus forced to bottle up their mirth until a more humorous point is reached, when an explosion of mirth will occur that is worth all the smaller laughs. An easy method of killing a laugh where it is not wanted is to raise the voice and hasten the reply, thus, generally, speeding up the scene in such a way



PERFORMANCE OF "EVERYMAN" AT SALZBURG FESTIVAL

Note the position of Death in the darkness of the doorway, serving to emphasize the face only and render the presence incorporeal

that the audience will repress laughter in order not to miss anything. An experienced actor will know just when it is wise to break into the audience's laughter. It is a great mistake to let the laugh die away altogether, as this will result in a break. The next "lines" should be begun just when the intensity of the laugh is on the wane. Sir Charles Wyndham said: "Break off the end of the laughs, and the audience will give you all the bits welded together into one big laugh before the end of the play." There may even be too much laughter during a play's performance,

for constant laughter will tend to make actors self-conscious. Bernard Shaw has been known to put up notices in the theatre requiring the audience not to laugh during a performance of *John Bull's Other Island* as laughter disturbed the progress of the play. This request was attributed to eccentricity and the desire for advertisement, whereas, undoubtedly, Shaw realized that constant laughter disturbed the pace and tempo of his play on which so much of its brilliant effect depended.

An actor should never laugh at his own jokes, for the moment an audience feel that the actor is seeing the humour of his actions, they will lose interest. Members of an audience like to feel that it is through their own cleverness that the comedy is detected. I have heard actors told that in order to make the play go with a swing they should laugh at each other's jokes, but the invariable result of this has been that the audience have then stopped laughing and let the actors do it all.

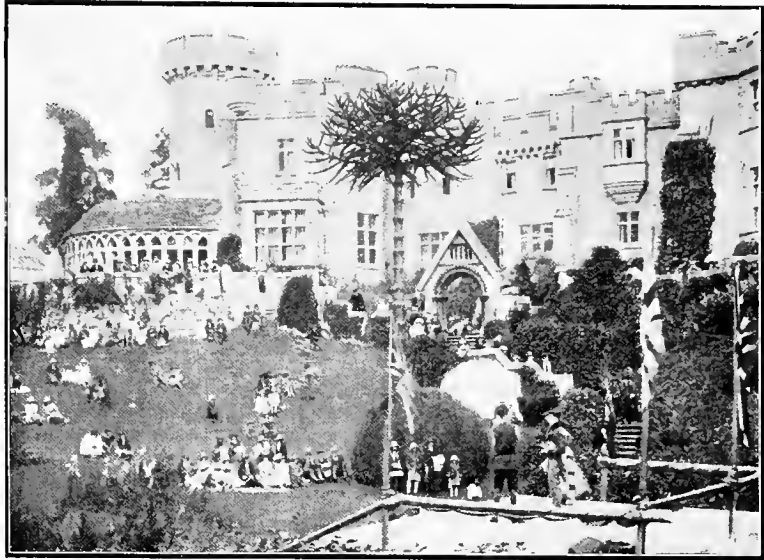
Again, the actor must take the utmost care of his voice, as it is the primary organ of control over his own emotions and over his audience. Just as the natural speaking voice is of little or no use on the stage, so also is the shout. The secret of all voice production is that the actor must train his voice so that he has the range and the pitch that are necessary, also the technique and the control that enable him to *seem* to speak naturally. However much an actor may know about the art of acting, he depends primarily upon his voice to express his art to others. In the modern reaction from the study of elocution, with all that it is wrongly held to convey of pedantry and precision, it has become the fashion to carry the theory of speaking naturally to the verge of inaudibility. Frequently the best speakers are engaged in vaudeville or variety entertainments, and not on the legitimate stage. This is due to the fact that vaudeville acting is a highly specialized form of entertainment, for variety entertainers for the short period that they are on the stage must be as technically perfect as possible, as they are thrown completely on their own resources and have nothing to help them. Consequently, it is on the vaudeville stage that we frequently find what can be effected by voice training. To be endowed with natural ability is one thing, to be able to use it properly another. It is always tone, more than anything else, that makes a line

powerful and moving on the stage. It was always said of the great actor, Macready, that by concentrating and practising on the one word "murder" he learnt to speak it in such a way that the audience shuddered at the mere sound that he was able to give to the two syllables.

Range is an essential factor—a voice must have the utmost flexibility if an actor is to be able to carry through a large part without strain. Any appearance of shouting must be avoided. There are few things that are more irritating to an audience, and occasionally an actor who has a strong voice is tempted to demonstrate it. The trained voice can always carry farther than the actor who shouts and it is far more moving. Certain lines lend themselves to deep, easy treatment, and other lines need a sharp, incisive method of speaking. The mere ring and tang of the voice may stir the audience and wake them up. Moments of pathos may best be given in softer tones; sarcasm and bitterness lend themselves to more metallic tones. An actor must learn to conserve his energies. His voice may seem to rise in power and intensity during moments of stress, but usually it is only an apparent rise. An actor who realizes his limitations will start an impassioned speech at a low pitch. He knows how to make his low tones carry effectively, and so he is able to rest his lungs, even at the biggest climax.

He has learned to pause and breathe, even when he seems to be talking at top speed. If an actor has

to burst into a room saying: "The house is on fire, they'll all be killed," he will have to convey the impression that he has run all the way from



AN OPEN-AIR PAGEANT AT DEVIZES CASTLE

Note the lack of relationship of players—who have not been provided with any significant background—to audience. The value of the human figure is lost against the immensity of the castle



PERFORMANCE OF "EVERYMAN" AT SALZBURG FESTIVAL

Note the use of background, which serves to throw up the figures

the fire, and that he is greatly perturbed and out of breath. Consequently his words will bear the

impression of tumbling out, but they will not actually tumble out. He will say: "The house" (point and gasp) "on fire" (gasp) "they'll" (swallow) "be killed." He will appear to have poured out the words in a rush, but actually he will have taken as much time and breathed as regularly as if he had sat down and made the announcement with the utmost deliberation. Frequently it is difficult to understand an actor because his enunciation is faulty, yet if care is taken to pronounce each syllable clearly, even slovenly speech will clarify very quickly. If we take care of the consonants the vowels will take care of themselves. Ellen Terry's voice was beautifully clean-cut and clear, but her enunciation was not the result of chance; it was the result of intensive training and unceasing care.

Throughout the play the actor's voice must be regarded as the melody—scenery, lights, properties, costumes, and music are only meant to supply the accompaniment. The tone, resonance, and audibility of the actor's voice will be the permanent basis on which all else must be built. In each production there must be a central theme, and to this theme all other factors must contribute. A play may appeal primarily to a sense of comedy or tragedy or to the pathetic or whimsical, but there must be this primary appeal only. Appeals should not be mixed. Thus there must be an atmosphere or tone to which the whole of any given performance must be keyed. This atmosphere counts far more with an audience than the most skilled technique, for it will be the atmosphere far more than the particular incidents of the story that will remain in the memory of the

audience after they have left the theatre. We have all had the experience of seeing a play that we have liked immensely, and then when we have given the bare outline of it to our friends we have wondered whatever it was that we saw in it. In all such cases it has been the atmosphere or tone that the actors were able to impart to it far more than the play itself that has charmed us. Most plays can be played in one of many tones, and often a great deal depends upon the one sought for by the producer. When Oscar Asche first produced *Kismet* he realized it as the tragic drama of a hungry, disappointed life. He saw his own part of the Beggar as an aged vagabond who had had his day. His cry, "Alms, for the love of Allah," showed the prayer of a broken-hearted, disappointed old man. But on the opening night of the play this actual cry of tragedy amused the audience, who received it with hearty laughter. Instantly, Asche, with superb mastery, altered his entire interpretation. He tinged it with comedy instead of pathos, and thus altered the whole tone of the play. *Kismet* is an example of the sort of Arabian Nights type of play that may be given in several ways, but the fantastic, semi-humorous, semi-tragic tone was the one that really carried the play to the hearts of the audience. It gave a delightful whimsicality to the whole production, so that even when the Beggar sold his daughter to the Rich Man, the audience were amused at, instead of being shocked by, the old rascal. In this way, the actor arrived at his interpretation under the stimulus of the audience's response, and the emotions of the people in the play were made as real and moving as possible to the people in the theatre.

## THE LAW OF COPYRIGHT

By DUDLEY S. PAGE

*Author of "Law of the Amateur Stage"*

COPYRIGHT is defined in Section 1 (2) of The Copyright Act, 1911, which now governs the law on the subject, as being the sole right of the author or composer of every original literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic work to reproduce his work to the exclusion of every one else for the period therein specified. It creates virtually a monopoly to that person in the product of his brain, and reserves to him the fruits of his labour.

The time specified in the Act subsists for the period of the author's life and fifty years after his death, and in the case of collective works, such as opera or musical comedy, in which the music, dialogue, and lyrics are distinct contributions of two or more persons, the fifty years does not begin to run until after the death of the survivor.

Parliament, therefore, has been far more generous to the owners of copyright than to the holders of patent rights, which latter extend for the comparatively short period of fourteen years only.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the copyright in many classic works, the authors or composers of which have been dead many years, still subsists.

A striking instance is to be found in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, in which the music and libretto are distinct contributions. The copyright in these does not expire until fifty years after the death of Sir Arthur Sullivan, and as he died in 1911 the copyright in these works will not expire for another twenty-seven years.

But apart from these interesting and comparatively little known facts, the law of copyright has an intimate bearing on the administration of most operatic and dramatic societies.

Perhaps the most frequent question that arises is: What constitutes infringement of copyright? Here we are confronted with a real difficulty, for the Act itself, whilst it defines in a general way what constitutes infringement, leaves us to guess whether any given case comes within the purview of that definition or not.

The matter is dealt with in Section 2 of the Act, which reads—

"Copyright in a work shall be deemed to be infringed by any person who, without the consent of the owner of the copyright, does anything the sole right to do which is by the Act conferred on the owner of the copyright."

That is certainly non-committal, not to say vague, and it is not surprising to find that much litigation has taken place upon the interpretation of the Section.

The most useful interpretation is to be found in the leading case of *Duck v. Bates* (1884), in which it was held that in order to constitute infringement there must be a representation that will injure the author's right to fees.

But, generally speaking, the test is whether the reproduction is of a *private* or *public* character, and here again it is not always easy to define a distinct line of demarcation between the two.

Obviously, a purely domestic performance of a play given in one's own home without any charge of any sort, would be a *private* reproduction, and would not constitute an infringement. But directly the element of payment enters into the business, the performance becomes one of a public character, even though those present may be there by invitation. Nor need the payment necessarily be the price of a seat; for, to quote the preamble to The Sunday Observance Act of 1781, there may be "many subtle and crafty contrivances," which, although quite innocently conceived, might render the performance one of a public character. For instances, admission by purchase of a programme; the supply of refreshments at more than the customary rates; the payment of one or more of those taking part; the issuing of invitations in the Press or the taking of a voluntary collection from those present, are all cases that transform an otherwise domestic and private performance into one of a public character, and thereby constitute an infringement.

All these cases have already formed the subject

of prosecutions, not necessarily under the Copyright Act, but also under other Acts regulating the theatre, but the test is the same, and would apply equally to infringement of copyright, even though the performances take place in a private house. Of course, if they were given in a public building, the danger would be infinitely greater, and might, in addition, involve trouble with the licensees of theatres or Entertainment Tax authorities.

I have dealt almost exclusively with the production and performance of stage plays, but there are many reading circles throughout the country that confine their activities to the reading of stage plays, and these are also intimately concerned with the law of copyright.

Here, again, the test would seem to be whether the reading of stage plays would constitute a public entertainment, or whether it is a purely domestic concern.

Any such reading circle that comprised a large number of people other than those actually reading parts, might constitute an infringement, particularly if any charge were made for admission. The matter, however, was much simplified by a special arrangement that the Incorporated Society of Authors made to govern such cases. By this arrangement the Society agreed that no fees shall be payable in respect of any private play reading that is confined only to its own members or their guests, providing no money is taken at the doors and the attendance present, excluding the cast of readers, consists of not more than fifty persons.

This arrangement certainly gives a fairly wide scope for the reading of plays, and so long as the rule is strictly followed, no infringement would be likely to occur.

Some publishers and controllers of performing rights have followed this rule, and in some cases they will agree to an extension of the number of persons present, subject to a payment of half the royalties.

To summarize the matter, the following rules should be observed—

1. The reading should be undertaken only by members of the circle or their guests.

2. No money must be taken for admission in any form, in subscriptions, collections, sale of programmes, or otherwise.

3. The attendance present, exclusive of cast, must not exceed fifty persons.

4. The play must be read from the published copy, and no scenery or properties must be brought into use, nor must any action be portrayed.

5. No public announcement of the reading must appear in the Press or otherwise.

The penalties of infringement of copyright are severe, and apply not only to the actual promoters of the performance, but also to any persons permitting the use of a theatre or place of entertainment for such a performance, unless he can prove that he had no ground for suspecting that an infringement of copyright was taking place.

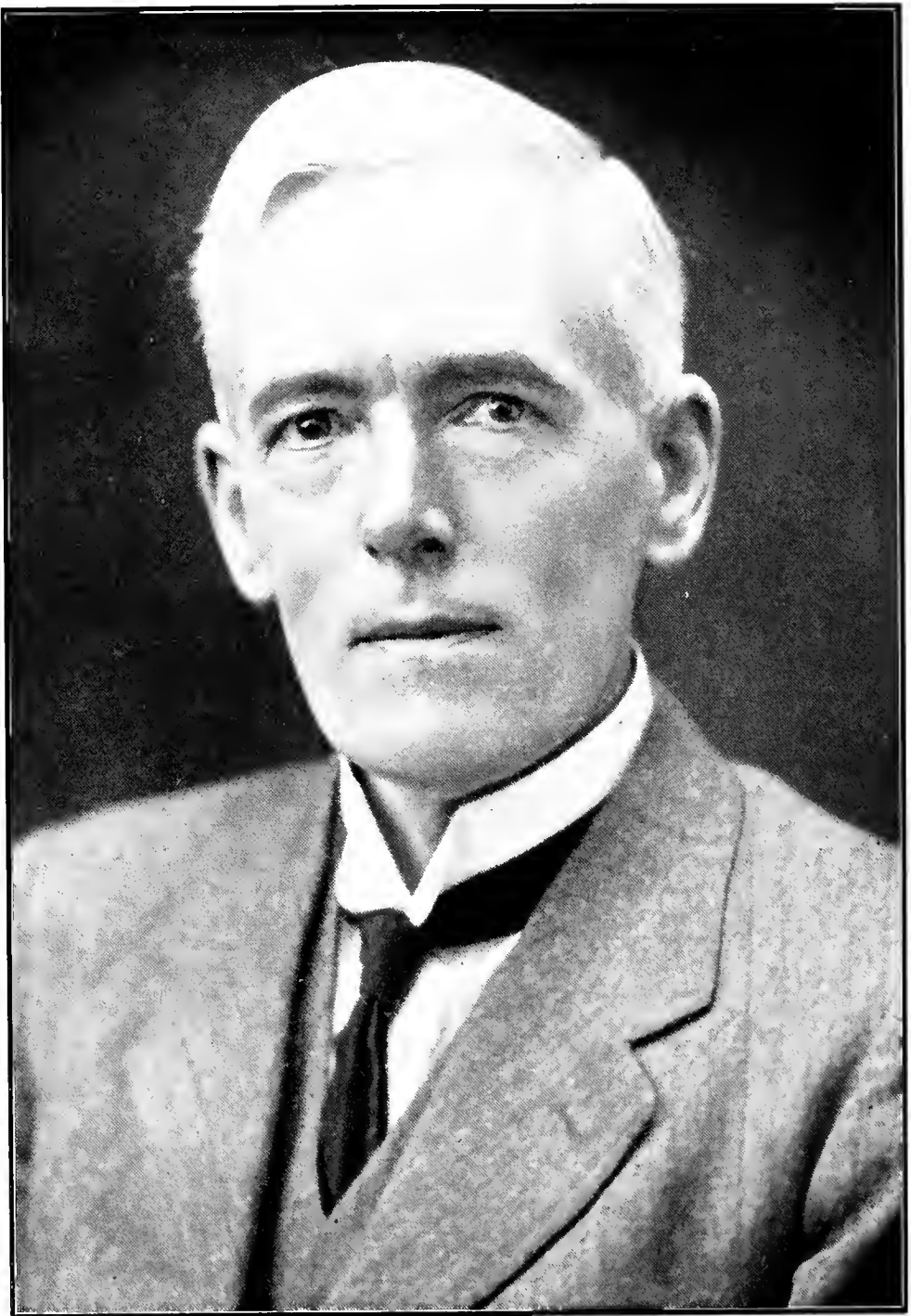
The author's remedy for infringement may be either by civil action or, in the case of entertainment for personal profit, by summary conviction at petty sessions, which latter involves a fine not exceeding £50, and even, in the case of subsequent offences by the same person, to imprisonment with or without hard labour, not exceeding two months.

From the foregoing, it will be seen that the law on the subject of copyright presents many pitfalls to the unwary, and, having regard to the somewhat uncertain state of the law, it behoves all those promoting entertainments of any kind to exercise caution. There are no hard and fast rules to guide one, and each case must depend upon its own particular circumstances. But the suggestions offered may help amateurs to decide upon the merits of any case with which they may be concerned.

Happily, authors are not usually vindictive, and they do not rush into prosecutions, but amateurs should not suppose that because they can name societies that have come within the infringements herein suggested and escaped prosecution, that they were *not* infringements, or even that they may be as lucky as those societies.

After all, it is mean and contemptible to rob an author of his fees, even by clever subterfuge, or by taking the chance that he may never be found out.





MR. PERCY ALLEN

*Photo by Russell, London*



# TOPICALITIES IN SHAKESPEARE

By PERCY ALLEN

FOR generations it has been customary to suppose that, excepting such indisputable cases as a eulogy of the "fair vestal throned in the west," in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—with a handful of other contemporary references thrown in—allusions to topical events, in the Shakespearean plays, are few. Sir Edmund Chambers, in his standard work, *William Shakespeare*, opines (I, 246) that "Shakespeare does not seem to have been greatly given to 'topical' allusions, and the hunt for them becomes dangerous." Modern research, however, is proving conclusively the fallacy of this statement; and I have no hesitation in saying that, while the historical plays, such as *Richard II* or *Henry V*, contain—as one would expect—relatively few references to events of Queen Elizabeth's day, the non-historical plays, on the contrary, comedy and tragedy alike, teem throughout with topical allusions, and are, in most instances, clearly recognizable dramatizations of events and personalities well known at the courts of Western Europe. It should be remembered, in this connexion, that the first surviving Elizabethan blank-verse drama, by Buckhurst and Norton, *Gorboduc*, in 1562, was a propagandist play conveying strong hints that the Queen should promptly provide the country with an heir to her throne. An age that did not know lecture-halls, newspapers, or any well-protected right of free speech, turned naturally to that mirror of its time, the stage, as the one available public debating platform of the day. Dangerous topicalities, of course, had to be cunningly introduced; and the Elizabethan dramatists, Shakespeare among them, developed great skill at weaving contemporary allusions into a framework provided by well-known older plays, stories, sagas, or folk-tales, which were selected because their outlines, or plots, fitted conveniently in with the Elizabethan story that the playwright desired secretly to tell.

But—a critical reader may ask—What does all this matter to producers or actors? To which I reply—These facts, when accepted as such,

matter very much; since it may greatly assist all concerned in the stage-production of a Shakespearean play to know the actual historic incidents that a particular piece records, together with the historic identities of its principal characters. Mr. Tyrone Guthrie, for example, would not, I presume, have dressed his production of *Twelfth Night* in costumes of Charles I's time had he understood that the comedy of Illyria dramatizes the marriage negotiations between Queen Elizabeth (Olivia) and the Duke of Alençon (Orsino), along with other incidents that took place at the Court of Whitehall, circa 1579-80—some years before Charles I was born! *Twelfth Night*, set in the Stuart period, becomes, *ipso facto*, almost meaningless.

Again, suppose that an actor cast for Malvolio, or for Sir Toby Belch, is in doubt as to his interpretation of the character. Is it not, in that case, worth his while to know that the historic original of Olivia's steward is Sir Christopher Hattton, the Queen's Vice-Chamberlain, and Captain of her Body-Guard; and that the Lady Olivia's uncle, Sir Toby, is, historically, Lord Buckhurst, uncle to England's Queen, through his grandmother, Margaret Boleyn, aunt to Anne Boleyn, who was Elizabeth's mother? Certain accomplished actors, I am aware—Mr. Ernest Milton is one—have no desire to visualize their parts outside the text of Shakespeare; but some—with Mr. Robert Atkins among them—assuredly think otherwise. Let me point out, by way of further example, that the undue prominence given, in most productions of *The Merchant*, to Shylock, as against Bassanio, is due to ignorance of the fact that this tragi-comedy of Venice is another dramatization of Elizabeth (Portia) and her suitors, with Bassanio again standing for the Duke of Alençon. The "3,000 ducats," for which Antonio (Lord Oxford) is "bound," are the £3,000 which that Earl invested and lost—"I am but mad north-north-west"—in the Frobisher Expedition of 1578, to the mystical north-west country of Cathay. Shareholders in that

quasi-fraudulent concern, whose Secretary was one Lock (confer *Shylock*), were called "Cataians," the precise name given by Sir Toby to Olivia-Elizabeth, who was also an investor and loser. Hence another reason for Portia's enmity towards the Jew !

A second group of plays—namely *Measure for Measure*, *Much Ado*, and *Romeo and Juliet*—dramatizes the bitter feud that developed, circa 1581, between Lord Oxford and his Roman Catholic cousins, Howard and Arundel, which, with other causes, resulted in Oxford (Claudio) being sent to the Tower of London—the actual prison within which, I suggest, certain scenes of *Measure for Measure* are set. Oxford had had a love affair with Anne Vavasour (Juliet), one of the Queen's Maids of Honour, who is also, in part, the Juliet of the Verona tragedy; the early episodes of which, though following, nominally, the old Italian tale, dramatize, topically, the street brawling in 1582 between the rival retainers of the Oxford and Howard-Arundel factions. Juliet's "cousin," Tybalt, is, historically, Anne Vavasour's uncle, Tom Knyvet, who fought with, and severely wounded, Lord Oxford (Romeo) during that same year.

Another fascinating quartet of characters, topically considered, are Hamlet, Troilus, Ophelia, and Cressida, who, in the Denmark tragedy, and also in the Grecian satire, are Lord Oxford and his Countess, Anne Cecil, daughter of Lord Burghley—known as "Pondus" at Elizabeth's Court, and dramatized as Polonius, in one play, and as Pandarus in the other. The character of Hamlet—though based in part upon the ages-old Hamlet saga tales—is, topically considered, an intimate idealization of Lord Oxford; while the tautological speeches of both Polonius and Pandarus—" 'tis true, 'tis pity, pity 'tis 'tis true," and so forth—paraphrase, again and again, actual

phrases used by Queen Elizabeth's Minister, as recorded in his letters, and other contemporary documents. Mr. William Poel, when producing *Hamlet*, used to ask his Polonius to "make-up" from the fine painting of Lord Burghley, in the National Portrait Gallery of London—yet he did not, I think, consciously realize that his model was the identical man whom Shakespeare was so bitterly burlesquing when he conceived the character Polonius.

Hamlet, who, by common consent, is among the nearest of all Shakespearean characters to "Shakespeare" himself, hints openly at the intimate topicality of the plays.

HAM. (*to Polonius-Burghley*): "Good my lord, will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used, for they are the abstract and brief chronicle of the time: after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live (*II, 2*) . . . We shall know all by this fellow (the actor): the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all" (*III, 2*).

*Macbeth* and *King Lear* are both intensely topical; but are concerned rather with contemporary events in the Courts of Edinburgh and Paris than with happenings among the denizens of Whitehall. The Darnley murder, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew (1572), are aimed at in *Macbeth*; and Edgar's appeal in *Lear* (*III, 6*)—"Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me"—is, as I read it, simply an S.O.S. from Navarre, the Huguenot leader, to "good Queen Bess," to cross "the bourn," or English Channel, and render help to her stricken fellow-protestants in France.

Surely a comprehension of some of these deeply meaningful topicalities in Shakespearean drama would greatly enlighten producers and actors alike, besides adding enormously to their potential interest in our national poet.

Percy Allen

# THE THEATRE IN THE STUDY

By EDWARD W. BETTS

Assistant Editor, "The Era"

OF the making of many books on and about the theatre there is fortunately no end. I say fortunately because where there is a flow from the printing press there is always life. A constant output of books might indeed be called a life stream.

People do not write except on a matter that interests them, and people certainly do not buy or read books unless they are interested in the subjects on which the authors are writing.

Measured by this test, the theatre was never more active than it is to-day. Few publishers bring out a list of new books without including therein a section devoted to the theatre or drama, while the number of plays that are published would surprise most people except those closely connected with the stage.

The amateur is especially well catered for, but there are few books on the theatre that do not contain much that can be of help and interest to the amateur, whether he be producer, or actor, or just one of the kind friends in front.

No one, for example, would begrudge a few hours with Bernard Shaw's *Our Theatres in the Nineties* (Constable) if it were recognized that the pages of these three volumes are as exciting as any novel and as piquant as any modern autobiography.

In one sense, these reprinted dramatic criticisms are autobiography. In them, Shaw cunningly adumbrates his own opinions of plays and playwriting. They are, therefore, worth reading as a sort of introductory treatise to the collected edition of the plays. But they are valuable in other respects. We see how the men and the women of the theatre worked in Shaw's early days, and if we read carefully we can learn why the drama of the period was the poor stuff it was.

A few extracted gems will suffice to give the flavour of Shaw's dramatic criticisms. On his first visit to the Adelphi Theatre, then the home of melodrama, he is amusingly impudent.

My frequent allusions to Adelphi melodrama were all founded on a knowledge so perfect that there was no need to verify it experimentally, but now that the experience has been imposed on me in the course of my professional duty it has confirmed my deductions to the minutest particular.

Or this in an article on "Sardoodledom." Shaw is describing a scene in Sardou's *Diplomacy* between Tree and Mrs. Patrick Campbell, and he complains that Mrs. Campbell ruined Tree's clothes—

Wherever her beautiful white arms touched him they left their mark. She knelt at his feet and made a perfect zebra of his left-leg with bars across it. Then she flung her arms convulsively right round him; and the next time he turned his back to the footlights, there was little to choose between his coatback and his shirtfront. Before the act was over a gallon of benzine would hardly have set him right again . . . May I suggest that soap and water is an excellent cosmetic for the arms and that it does not mark coats?

And even the amateur can chuckle at the following—

On paying a somewhat belated visit to *The Chili Widow* I was astonished to find that Mr. Bouchier has not only taken the Royalty Theatre—many have done that before him and some have repented it—but has actually founded there, with apparent success—a new school of stage art. At least it is new to the regular professional stage, though not to the country house or the university dramatic club. It is the school of the romping, gleeful amateur, not he with the contracted brow, the Elizabethan imagination, and the potent method of voice production, but the facetious undergraduate who dresses up for a lark, the awfully jolly girl who can act like anything, and the funny man with accomplishments, including the banjo. I am not intolerant of such sportiveness; the majesty of criticism can unbend on occasion and enjoy a bit of fun, served up with ridiculous home-made art, as much as the humblest member of the domestic staff admitted to the drawing room to see the daughters of the house in their stage glory. Even at the Royalty Theatre I do not object to it; only it is my duty to be perfectly explicit with the public as to the nature of the entertainment.

After that, turn to Huntly Carter's *New Spirit in the European Theatre, 1914-24* (Benn), and match the "sportiveness" of G.B.S. with this dip into the future.

I dream of a regenerated theatre that shall come new-born from the workers. If I say so it is because I feel that the workers do not need regeneration but are the regenerators. I feel that their awakening to the importance of the theatre to their cultural life means that we are faced by a new body of pioneers of a new dramatic motive—a new technique and a new moral outlook.

Then there is James Agate, in *A Short View of the English Stage* (Jenkins)—

It is in the hearts of the amateurs of England that the drama is flourishing.

And the judicial Allardyce Nicoll, in his *British Drama, An Historical Survey from the Beginnings to the Present Time* (Harrap), sums it up in this way—

The theatre, the great theatre, the theatre which will live for all time is at once the most traditional and the most progressive of all the arts.

The more one considers the books written about the theatre, the more one must be impressed by the wealth of worth-while literature that has been inspired by this great subject. So huge, indeed, is the library of the drama that I feel abashed at my temerity in attempting even a bird's-eye view of its contents. With this necessary note of apology, I will try, at least, to continue the difficult though fascinating task of choosing *some* of the books that should be studied by every keen stage aspirant. I will endeavour to keep in view the vital consideration that most of my readers have only a limited time to devote to reading about the theatre.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHIES

I shall assume that a short guide to the contents of the most important books will be useful to amateurs who desire to know where they can find what they need. Where the title of a book is self-explanatory I shall not add further description. May I say here that comprehensive bibliographies are to be found in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on Drama, in C. B. Purdom's illustrated handbook, *Producing Plays*, and in Allardyce Nicoll's *British Drama*, already quoted.

There are many others, but these, I think, cover the whole field in sufficient detail.

*Producing Plays* (Dent) is an invaluable volume. It has much that will help actors as well as producers, and there is a chapter on the Audience, with a section on "the ideal audience."

Donovan Maule's *The Stage as a Career* (Pitman) may be regarded as a companion volume to Mr. Purdom's. Its claim to be a practical handbook on modern stagecraft for amateurs and professional aspirants is abundantly justified.

A smaller but no less worth-while book is *The Producer and the Players*, by Edward Lewis (Allen and Unwin). Here the Author bases his cogent and helpful advice on experience gained as an adjudicator for the National Festival of Community Drama.

Another book that should not be neglected, written by a professional producer, is Frank Vernon's *Modern Stage Production (The Stage)*, although there may be some dissentients to his claim that the audience has created the producer by demanding better plays, better balanced in production.

#### THE THEATRE

*The Theatre Advancing* by Gordon Craig should be consulted in this connexion.

Although not a "practical" book in the same sense as are those just mentioned, I must include here a grateful reference to C. K. Munro's *Watching a Play* (Howe). Here the Author of *At Mrs. Beam's*, *The Rumour*, and *The Mountain* sets out to describe what kind of a thing it is that can successfully be watched. His analysis of Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* is a masterpiece of modern criticism. It is equally helpful to producers, authors, actors, and audiences.

John Drinkwater's *The Gentle Art of Theatre Going* (Robert Holden) is the best short survey of the modern theatre that I know; it is always entertaining and sometimes provocative, and it gives a vivid picture of contemporary drama.

Other recommended books that might be regarded as coming within a similar category are A. E. Morgan's *Tendencies of Modern Drama* (Constable); "The direction of English drama is towards poetry." I wonder! A. S. Rappoport's *The English Drama* (Temple Classics); F. Vernon's *Twentieth Century Theatre* (Harrap); *About the Theatre* and *The Old Drama and the New* by William Archer (Heinemann); *Dramatic Values* by C. E. Montague (Chatto & Windus); and *The Exemplary Theatre* by Harley Granville Barker (Sidgwick & Jackson).

Reverting to practical matters, here are one or

two books that need only to be mentioned: *A Textbook of Stagecraft* by Susan Richmond (New Year Press); *How to Write Plays* by Basil Hogarth (Pitman); *Play Production for Everybody* by Monica Ewer (Labour Publishing Company); *The Art of the Elocutionist* by T. Cuthbert Samuels (Pitman); *Guide to Theatrical Make-up* by Charles S. Parsons (Pitman); *How to Make-up* by S. J. Adair Fitzgerald (Samuel French, Ltd.); *Stage Costuming* by Agnes Brooks (Macmillan); *Amateur Stage Management and Production* by Charles S. Parsons (Pitman); *The Improvised Stage* by Marjorie Somerscales (Pitman); *Voice Training in Speech and Song* by Henry Harper Hulbert (University Tutorial Press); *Stage Effects* by A. Rose (Routledge).

#### WORKS OF REFERENCE

Closely allied to what I have called practical books are works of reference and in this respect, also, the stage is particularly favoured. First and foremost is John Parker's monumental *Who's Who in the Theatre* (Pitman). This is a treasure house of information about the theatre. The following are also recommended: *Dictionary of the Drama* by W. Davenport Adams (Chatto & Windus). Only one volume of this work was published, but Mr. Parker has announced that he will complete it. I hope it will be soon. *The Amateur Dramatic Year Book* edited by G. W. Bishop (Black). The last volume was issued in 1929. *Amateur Clubs and Actors* by W. G. Elliott (Arnold); *Stage Encyclopaedia of Plays (The Stage)*. The "Stage" Year Books, and "The Era" Almanacks, although unhappily not now annually issued, are well worth consulting.

If the reader desires to dig deeper into the historical ground, there are many books ready to hand. Those I now mention are, of course, supplemental to Allardyce Nicoll's ever-necessary histories, and the others to which I have already referred. *Pepys's Diary* must find a place, even if he is far oftener consulted in anthologies and elegant extracts than in his own particular covers. As a lover of the theatre we must salute him!

Jeremy Collier's *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*, published in 1687, is still worth looking into, although I think of it of greater value as the provoker of the amusing *Apology for His Life*, by Colley Cibber

(1740). Here we have the English stage in one of its great periods, and Colley gives full length portraits (the phrase is Hazlitt's) of Kynaston, Betterton, Booth, Estcourt, Penkethman, Dogget, Mahun, Wilks, Nokes, Sandford, Mrs. Monford, Mrs. Oldfield, Mrs. Barry, and Mrs. Bracegirdle. There's richness for you! And the sly, impudent Colley peeps out through every page.

For longer surveys there are *History of the London Stage and its Famous Players, 1576-1903*, by H. Barton Baker (Routledge), and *Their Majesty's Servants*, or annals of the English stage from Thomas Betterton to Edmund Kean; actors, authors, audiences, by Dr. Doran (Nimmo).

Among "local" histories, reference can be made to *A History of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre* by Bache Matthews (Chatto & Windus); *The Manchester Stage* by C. E. Montague, A. M. Monkhouse, and others (Constable); *A Short History of Bristol's Little Theatre* (Partridge & Lowe); *Old Cornish Drama* by Thurston C. Peter (Elliott & Stock); and a symposium on Somersetshire drama, to which S. R. Littlewood and Harold Downs were among the contributors.

Much useful and entertaining information can be found in most of the autobiographies and biographies of actors and actresses, and in such volumes as H. G. Hibbert's *A Playgoer's Memories* (Grant Richards), and *Through the Box-Office Window* by W. H. Leverton (Werner Laurie). Mr. Leverton was box-office manager at the Haymarket Theatre for many years, and what he does not know about plays, dramatists, and playgoers need not worry anybody.

#### LIVES

Among the "lives," you must let me make an arbitrary selection: *Dame Madge Kendal* by Herself (Murray); *G. G., Reminiscences of nearly half a century* by George Grossmith (Hutchinson); *Hayden Coffin's Book* (Alston Rivers); *Fifty Years of Spoof* by Arthur Roberts (John Lane); *Between Ourselves* by Seymour Hicks (Cassell); *Candied Peel* by Kinsey Peile (Black); *Let's Pretend* by Cedric Hardwicke (Grayson); *Behind the Scenes with Cyril Maude*, by Himself (Murray); *Rosemary* by Fay Compton (Alston Rivers); *Mainly Players*, Bensonian Memories by Constance Benson (Thornton Butterworth);

*Barry Jackson and the London Theatre* by G. W. Bishop (Barker); *Sir Charles Wyndham* by T. Edgar Pemberton (Hutchinson); *Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft*, on and off the stage (Bentley); *I Was An Actor Once* by Robert Courtneidge (Hutchinson); *Ellen Terry and Her Sisters* by T. Edgar Pemberton (Pearson); *A Wandering Minstrel* by Sir Henry Lytton (Jarrold).

I am afraid you will have learned all about my prejudices and predilections from this list. And to corroborate—or destroy—your theories, I will ask you to be sure to read Bernard Shaw's *Quintessence of Ibsenism* (Constable).

There are many books of what may be called general interest. Here my difficulty is to decide what to omit. If I do not mention your own particular favourite, will you deduce that I considered it unnecessary to call attention to a volume you already knew? If I am able to introduce you to a new friend, I shall be fully satisfied. Here then is my own pet list—

*The Theatre in Europe* by Eleanor F. Jourdain (Methuen); *The Organized Theatre* by St. John Ervine (Allen & Unwin); *The Theatre in My Time* also by St. John Ervine (Rich & Cowan); *Literature in the Theatre* by W. A. Darlington (Chapman & Hall); *The Problem of Hamlet* by J. M. Robertson (Allen & Unwin); *Frames of Mind* by A. B. Walkley (Grant Richards);

*Letters of an Unsuccessful Actor* (Cecil Palmer); *An Essay in Comedy* by George Meredith (Constable); *Shakespeare as a Playwright* by Brander Matthews (Longman).

If you should be interested in the tribe of critics, you must see James Agate's *The English Dramatic Critics, An Anthology, 1660-1932* (Arthur Barker).

And, in conclusion, although I am loath to leave this intriguing adventure, may I recommend you to buy or borrow *The 36 Dramatic Situations* (James Knapp Reeves), a translation by Lucile Ray of Georges Polti's ingenious effort to prove that there are only thirty-six plots?

There may be only thirty-six situations, but there are at least 36,000 volumes to explain them. As for the total of published plays, I cannot attempt an estimate. The lists of Messrs. Samuel French, Ltd., will help you in a choice of suitable pieces for production: The *Mermaid Series*; Dibdin's *London Theatre*; and the *Contemporary British Dramatists* (Benn) are indispensable for any student of the theatre. And if any legal troubles should intervene, there are *Law of Theatres, Music Halls and Cinemas* by Sidney C. Isaacs (Stevens), and *Law of the Amateur Stage* by Dudley S. Page (Pitman). But if you buy them I hope you will never need to use them professionally.

## MAKING A PLAIN FLAT

By HAL D. STEWART

*Author of "Rizzio's Boots," "The Blind Eye," etc.*

AN ordinary flat is simply a rectangular frame covered with canvas, which is painted to represent whatever is required. Fig. 1 shows such a frame. It will be noticed that it has two additional cross pieces, or rails. These are required to strengthen the frame, and to ensure that it keeps its shape. The number required depends on the height of the flat. With a flat, 16 ft., it is advisable to have two. In the case of flats under 10 ft. high, it is possible to dispense with these rails altogether. It is not advisable to do so, however, because they also serve a secondary purpose. They are used to carry nails or hooks for hanging pictures, mirrors, or other properties, on the walls. It is, therefore, wise to have at least one supporting rail, whatever the height of the flat. When the flat is being constructed, this secondary purpose should be remembered, and one rail should be placed at a height that is suitable for carrying whatever properties may be required.

I have already suggested that the timber for your flats should be ordered dry, from a sawmill, and dressed on two faces. In this case, all that will remain for you to do, in preparation, will be to dress the edges. This can be done with a hand plane in a few minutes.

Next, the timber must be cut into the lengths required. For the flat shown in Fig. 1, two long upright pieces and four short rails are necessary. The uprights are 16 ft. in length, but before considering the length of the rails you must decide how these are to be jointed to the uprights.

Figs. 2, 3, and 4 show three different methods of jointing. In the case of the mortise and tenon joint (Fig. 2), a mortise, or socket, is cut in the upright, and a tenon, or projecting tongue, is cut on the end of the rail. The tenon must fit tightly into the mortise, in which position it is then glued. The length of the tenon must be the same as the width of the upright. There is no doubt that this is the most workmanlike joint, and it is almost always used in professionally made scenery,

but it demands a certain amount of skill in carpentry, and also a good deal of patience. Therefore I recommend the second method, or half check, as shown in Fig. 3. This joint is so simple that a glance at the figure will explain it. The

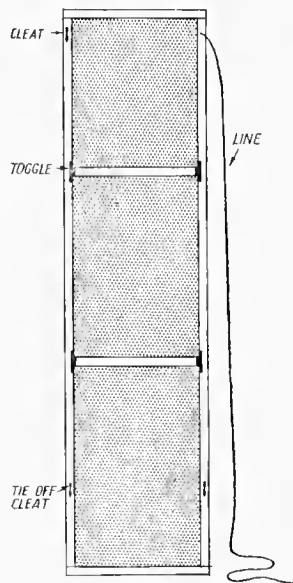


FIG. 1

two pieces must fit snugly together. They can then be fastened, preferably by gluing and nailing, or, alternatively, by means of screw nails.

The butt joint (Fig. 4) is simpler still. The ends are squared off, placed together, and fastened by a metal corner plate, which is screwed in position on the reverse side of the flat. This third method is the simplest for the amateur carpenter, and quite satisfactory results can be obtained by using corner plates in this way, if the scenery is small. If your scenery is 16 ft. high, however, there are objections to this method. The larger the frame, the greater are the strains on the joints, and the butt joint is weaker than either of the other two I have mentioned.

Consequently, I recommend the half check for scenery over, say, 10 ft. or 11 ft. in height.

If your joints are half checked, or mortised, your rails will require to be cut the full breadth of the flat; that is to say, they will require to be 4 ft. long for a flat that is 4 ft. wide. With a butt joint, however, they will be 4 ft., less the width

can also be fixed with toggles. Toggles for 3 in. by  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. timber cost about 4s. 6d. to 6s. a dozen, according to the type and quality required.

The frame must be canvased. This step in the construction of the flat is not one that calls for any specialized skill. The canvas is cut to the required size, and glued and nailed to the frame,

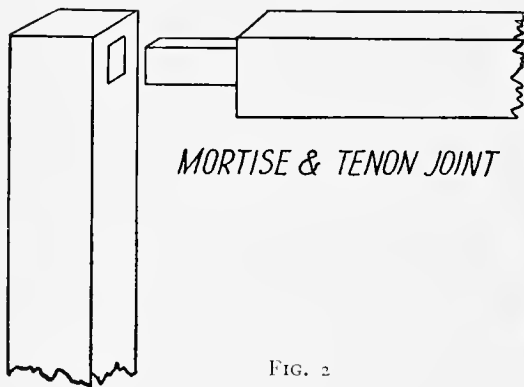


FIG. 2

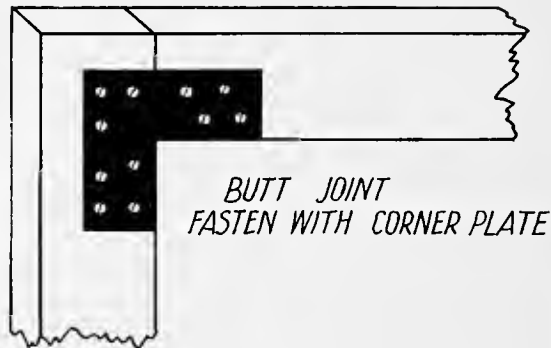


FIG. 4

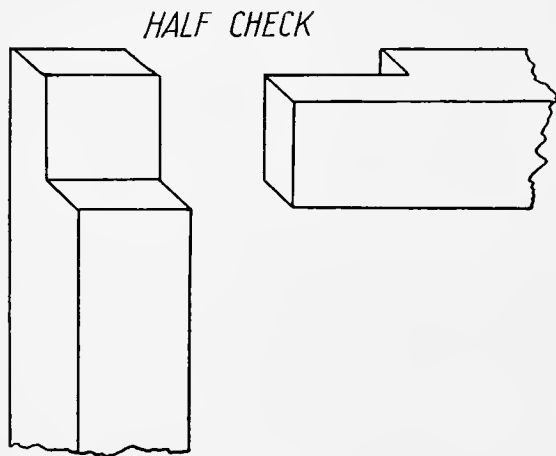


FIG. 3

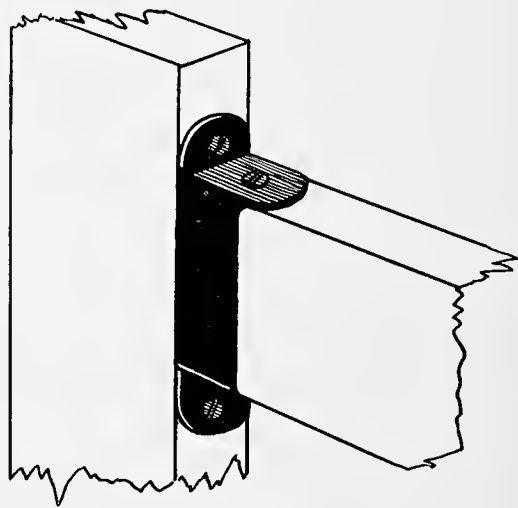


FIG. 5

of the two uprights. In this case the uprights will be 3 in. wide; therefore, if you are using butt joints, the rails will require to be cut in lengths of 3 ft. 6 in.

The inside rails are best fixed by means of toggles. A toggle is an iron attachment that is screwed to the rail and the upright (Fig. 5).

Corner braces can be used to strengthen the frame and to ensure that it keeps its shape. These

on which it must be tightly stretched. This work must, however, be done with great care. It is essential that the canvas be properly stretched, and that there be no creases or wrinkles.

Two things remain to be added—the line and cleats. The line, or rope, is a stout cord, of good quality and about the thickness of a clothes-line. It should be securely nailed to the back of the right-hand upright. The cleat is screwed to the



back of the left-hand upright. The centre of the cleat should be exactly level with the point where the line is fixed. A tie-off cleat is screwed—also, of course, on the back—about 2 ft. from the bottom of each upright. These cleats are used in conjunction with the line for tying the flats together. Fig. 6 shows how this is done. The line

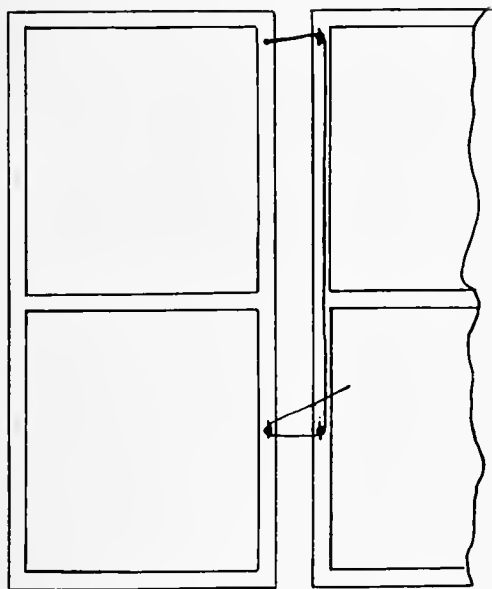


FIG. 6

is passed over the cleat at the top of the next flat, and brought down, under and round the tie-off cleats, where it is made fast. The two flats are thus held closely together.

With all the flats held securely in this manner, an ordinary three-sided box set, will stand by itself, but not sufficiently firmly. The aim of the scenery constructor must be to give an impression of solidity and permanence. This impression is destroyed whenever there is any movement of the flats.

Movement occurs in two ways: (1) The canvas may billow out from the frame. This will not happen if the canvas is properly stretched in the first place. (2) The flats themselves may move or sway, even when they are tightly laced together. To counteract movement or swaying, it is necessary to use braces to support a number of the flats at the back.

These braces may be of wood or iron, and they

are usually from 4 ft. to 6 ft. in length. There is a metal attachment at either end of a wooden brace. Each has a hole through which a screw eye is passed. The brace is screwed to the flat at one end, and to the stage at the other (Fig. 7). If the brace is of iron, the holes to take the screw eyes are in the brace itself.

Wooden braces can be made without much difficulty. The metal attachments that are fastened to each end can be made by a local blacksmith or bought at a small cost. I suggest, however, that as these braces can be purchased cheaply, most amateur societies would do well to buy a few from the makers. An ordinary brace, 5 ft. long, costs about 4s. Short braces, which are used for special purposes, are proportionately cheaper.

A better brace than either of the two I have mentioned is the wooden extension brace. This is made in two pieces, which are clamped together. The length of the brace can, therefore, be adjusted after it is fixed in position, and the angle of the flat it is supporting can be altered by this means. These extension braces are rather more expensive; they cost about 7s., but it is a great advantage to have at least two braces of this description.

The brace is secured to the flat by means of a metal screw eye. This can easily be screwed in

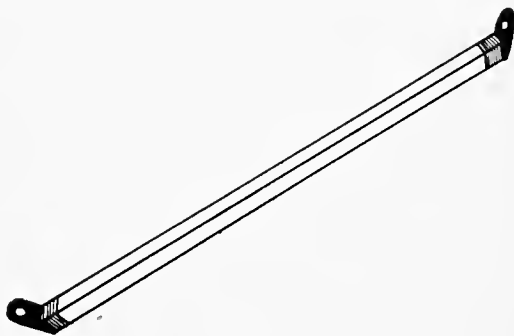


FIG. 7

with the fingers. A screw eye is not, however, suitable for screwing to the stage. Most stages are made of hardwood, and a substantial, specially made screw is necessary, if it is to be screwed in with the fingers. The screw eye does not give sufficient purchase, and what is known as a stage screw should be used.

In some cases the management of the theatre will not allow screws of any description to be driven into the stage. The brace must then be held in position by a weight. Weights specially shaped for this purpose can be bought.

It is preferable, and much quicker, to have a hook instead of a hole on the top end of the brace. The screw eye is then screwed into the flat, first of all, and the brace is hooked to it.

The method I have described is the normal method of securing scenery. Flats should never be nailed together, either at the top or at the bottom, unless the set is permanent and has not to be changed. Then, of course, the set may be built as substantially as time and finances permit. Each side may be built in one unit, in which case joins will be eliminated. To do this, however, is expensive. Few societies would build a set that had to be scrapped after one production.

Even when stock scenery is being used, if the set is to remain up for a whole production it is possible to exercise much greater care in setting, and refinements that would not otherwise be possible can be introduced. For instance, a narrow piece of canvas should be glued over each join, and then painted the same colour as the rest of the set. This work hides the join; if it is well done it makes it impossible for the audience to detect where one flat ends and another begins, and it adds greatly to the appearance of reality. An actual plastic picture moulding can be added. This should be carefully mitred at the corners. It can be placed at any height—not necessarily the height of a rail—because it will be sufficient

to nail it where the uprights of the flats occur. If lights have to be switched on or off, the light can be wired to the actual switch used by the players. This will ensure perfect timing, and ease the task of the electrician, who has probably got to bring up several circuits at the same time as the light is switched on. It is often difficult to do this with one pair of hands.

There is another type of plain flat—quite different from that which I have described. It is extremely easy to make, and although suitable only for small scenery, it is an ideal type for many societies. This is a flat made of Beaver boarding, or any similar material of this type, which is now used extensively in modern buildings. The flat consists simply of a piece of Beaver boarding cut to the required size, and strengthened by a wooden strap down each side. The boarding should be screwed to the strap, which need not be more than 2 in. by  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. after dressing. The cleats and line should be fixed to these straps in the usual way. It is unnecessary to have any cross nails. No canvas is used, the boarding itself offering an ideal surface for painting. These flats, however, have the disadvantage of being heavy, and for various reasons it is impracticable to use Beaver boarding except for small scenery—say about 10 ft. high.

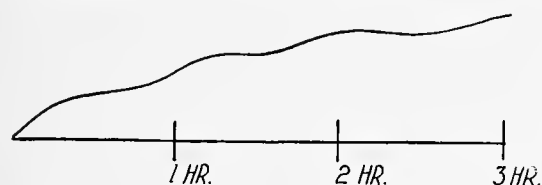
I have dealt at length with the plain flat because it is the standard unit of a set. Other types, required for doors, windows, fireplaces, etc., are variations, and if the construction of the plain frame is thoroughly understood it is a simple matter to grasp the differences necessary for flats that are to be used for special purposes.

## BODY RHYTHM

By F. E. DORAN

Secretary, Manchester Playgoers' Club

THE time factor in dramatic art is one that is continually overlooked, particularly when the control of body movement by the individual actor is concerned. In body movements, if a given action is too rapid, it is not effective; if it is too slow, it creates an anti-climax. We may visualize a graph somewhat on the following—



The horizontal line represents the unchanging and unalterable time factor, and the ascending line shows the rhythm—variable, and (we hope) controllable—which is contributed by the player. He has to make his own tension, as it were, in certain places and at certain times.

Modern methods demand more subtlety than was required for the old transpontine methods, the principles of which were thoroughly understood and fully expressed by the players of the time, as the accompanying reproductions of old Victorian theatrical actors and characters show. These are taken from the famous prints in Mr. B. Pollock's collection at Hoxton, and are shown on p. 596 as examples of emphasis by gesture to produce definite emotional results in the audience. They tell their own tale, and indicate degrees of ferocity and determination. Full blooded acting is depicted here, with no suggestion of the "cup and saucer" gestures, or the movements of the modernist. There is no subtlety. Note how the Sprite figure, mainly by keeping the fingers open, achieves his effect. Mr. Hicks, as Morden Brenner, conveys a torrential temper by closing his fist. The flexion of the knees is different, and in the case of Mr. Collins as Paul Clifford and Mr. Hicks as Robert Macaire the slight variation in the body angle produces entirely different results.

It is this personal equation that controls the ascending and curving line.

The actor individually must have rhythmic balance, and the producer must balance the performers. If a cast is of unequal personal skill, or ignorant of first principles, then the producer's task, if we are agreed that it is to produce a work of art, and not to act as a mere coach, is almost impossible.

The actor must contribute something. In the old days of great acting and bad drama the actor did all the work. Read some of the scripts of the 1830 to 1870 period, and visualize the effect that was required to project the material. The plays raised audiences to heights of enthusiasm. How? By pure technique, skill! Look at the poses, and note how the strength or comedy of the character was projected by stance alone. Examine the angles of flexion at the joints. The basic description, whether for comedy or tragedy, would be the same; it would be a description of one pose. It is a matter of degree, of skill, plus temperament.

The fault of this school of histrionics was that it developed ranting and tub-thumping. But in spite of excesses of elocution and deportment, the work of the period should be studied, and not despised. While it certainly produced the Vincent Crummles School it was also the period during which the Irvings of *The Bells*, the Wallers of *Henry V*, the Wilson Barretts of *The Sign of the Cross* graduated.

Such physical acting did not fully meet the intellectual demands of the play, but it was that school that kept the actor as the main prop of the theatre. The public still want acting. Consequently, second-class plays are often more successful than good intellectual plays. Second-class plays usually have good acting parts that a strong actor can project to his audience, whereas intellectual plays often sacrifice the theatre to the platform. An idea must not only be dramatic in itself (i.e. *Ghosts* and *A Doll's House*), but it must be presented dramatically, which means also

theatrically. C. K. Munro's excellent play, *Rumour*, was impossible as a play of the theatre as it was written. There was too much of the idea in it and not enough of the theatre until it was properly cut so that the producer, within the limits of the horizontal line in Fig. 1, could produce the emotional and tentional effects that are

London company: the reproduction is a copy, and, consequently, has not the spark of creative genius, though the touring company, if left to themselves, might produce equally good actions and business, though they might be different in detail.

All I can do here, and all I desire to do, is to point out that acting *qua* acting has certain general



inherent in the plot and that are indicated by the curve.

It is difficult, and too dangerous, to lay down definite schedules, as each actor is a problem to both himself and the producer. The same scene is different for each individual, hence the weakness of a touring company that attempts to reproduce the actions and business of the original

and individual rules, and that a producer must have a cast that is aware of the traditions of the art of acting. There is a tendency among amateurs, particularly those of the advanced drama school, the coterie type, to ignore, and even to despise, the past. I think that the old-time actor had a lot to teach us, and that the modern drama, good though it may be to read, would be better

to look at in production if my opinion were more generally shared.

One thing that the old actor learnt and practised was rhythmic body movement. This may or may not have been unconscious, but it was certainly not complicated by the high-flown technique and jargon or terminology of to-day; nevertheless it was there, and, in consequence, the actor of the old school acted in a manner that it is impossible to caricature to-day: it is so much of a caricature itself.

It is a truism to say that bad drama makes good actors, and vice versa. This may be due to the balancing factor of the audience. The audience is the focal point of the combined attack of the actor and author. The attention must be held and interest aroused. This attention and interest may be held by the purely emotional content of the acting or the intellectual content of the play, or, and better than either, by both in combination. But how often do we see a play of ideas presented weakly because the author has not provided the actor with something to ACT as well as something to SAY, or because the actor cannot use for acting such material as the author has provided.

#### NEW ACTING FOR OLD

In the period suggested by the Pollock prints the drama had reached its lowest level. The plays of the period were quite out of touch with reality, and dealt with variations of obvious plots of the simplest form. Subtlety was unknown, characters were as white as snow or as black as coal, though occasionally true humanity peeped out of the comic relief. The effect was that the actor had to exert all his art to hold his public, and, consequently, histrionic capacity developed along physical lines. Heroes had to be heroic, in the grand manner, and when villainy was afoot, then 'twas villainy indeed. An examination of these old scripts will show at once how effective the actor had to be. The lines gave little help, and were often of the most platitudinous description when they were not definitely puerile. The actor carried the burden, and, consequently, voices that could roar like thunder or whisper like a trickling brook became a *sine qua non*, while gestures and body movements had to take on the similitude of the gods. I suppose Barry Sullivan

would be the most recent exponent of the true barn-storming technique (which was also created and affected by the poor illumination of candles or oil lamps), with the Irvings and Tree connecting the period with the moderns. This tradition can be seen to-day in sublimated form when we witness players like Sir John Martin Harvey, who adapts the principles of that technique and refines it to the advantages offered by modern equipment.

#### REALIST v. REALISM

The Shakespearean productions by Sir Oswald Stoll in Manchester and London demonstrated the principle in application. When *Henry V* was played by Mr. Godfrey Tearle the generosity of his body movements and the gracefulness of his poses became matters for comment. Yet this comment in itself was a commentary on the decline in the art of acting that is due to so-called realist acting, which, in the long run, is not acting at all, but realism out of place.

This style of acting is purely a question of control and a knowledge of rhythm. Shakespeare knew of it when he made Hamlet tell the players how to do "The Mousetrap." Based on natural ability, it has to be learnt. Sir Frank Benson insisted on it in the great days of the Bensonians. Fencing, swimming, and football were all part of the Bensonian curriculum. There is an old story of a Benson advertisement in a stage paper. It read: "Wanted at once. Juvenile for Laertes. Must be good half-back." The voice, the legs, the arms, the eyes, and the mouth, even the shoulders and elbows, can all be made subordinate to the art of acting, and if any claim to satisfactory acting ability is to be substantiated, this subordination must be brought about by study of such models as are available and by practice. Where a good actor is to be seen, go to see him. Note his method, not for copy purposes, but as an example of skill in holding the attention of an audience. Note the details. See him two or three times. The first time watch the broad outline; the second his special business; and the third time the details.

Amateurs too often mistake their own facility for ability, their ability for competence, and their competence for talent. Over and over again an individual with no more knowledge of acting

than is obtained by a yearly visit to the pantomime and weekly to the picture house will accept a part. Consequently we get mere performances, with no colour and no intensity, and often without understanding. Acting will not come by chance, and without training and experience. The basis is simple and has been stated elsewhere. This contribution is an expansion of the basic necessity for the actor to be heard and to be seen. He must also be understood, and he must understand. In brief, before he appears in public as an actor he should be able to complete his contract, i.e. take his part and act the part in a reasonable manner. To do this he must have adequate knowledge of body control and rhythm. The great actors are his models.

It must not be assumed from the foregoing that I belong to the school that thinks that the days of great acting are past. Far from it. Sir Cedric Hardwicke and Charles Laughton can testify against me, and I believe the evidence of my own eyes. I witness two or three shows a week, and nearly always see something of first-rate quality, even in the most unexpected places—amateur or professional. My contention is that these instances of artistry are not accidental, that, consciously or unconsciously, the true artist has

absorbed that tradition on which the art of acting is based, and that, unless an actor studies and understands these principles of the past, his work will never be in the first class. In case I may be taken too literally or misunderstood, let me hasten to state that the technique of Messrs. Hicks and Collins as illustrated would be entirely out of place in, say, a Galsworthy play, although it might be a good number for a Green Room Rag. But it is necessary to have a grasp and an understanding of the physical aspect of the art. The playwright of to-day presents character as well as situation. The authors of the period of Messrs. Hicks and Collins cared not a jot for psychology or character; action, revolt, tumult, and hand to hand combats were their stock in trade. The actors behaved accordingly. To-day the actor works on finer ground. Nervous sensibility is the ground work of the action. The sweeping arm has become the twitching finger. The call of the *basso profundo* for the villain's blood has become the request for a cup of tea, and I am prepared to state that to-day's artists can do either or both with equal ability because the one is the concomitant of the other; and the amateur who studies these elements is wise.

# SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND

By NEVIL TRUMAN

*Hon. Secretary, Nottingham Playgoers' Club*

**G**LORIANA, outwardly, was nothing but a walking wardrobe—a mass of wires, stays, and struts.

## ELIZABETHAN DRESS

The *Spanish Cape* (men) was circular, with a high collar, and was banded along its outer edge with braids.

The *Italian Doublet* closely fitted the body from neck to just below the waist, where it ended in a short frill. It was boned and padded so that the front edge was curved outwards to a point below the waist, which looked like, and was called, a peascod. The armhole was outlined with a padded crescent-shaped epaulet, and at first the sleeves (which were of a different colour) were tight, long, and slashed, but later they were not slashed. The wrist finished with a frill or turned back linen cuff, lace edged, and the sleeve could at option be split to show the under sleeve. The tunic was buttoned down the centre, and could be opened to disclose the vest, in which case it was reversed with a different colour. It had a high collar.

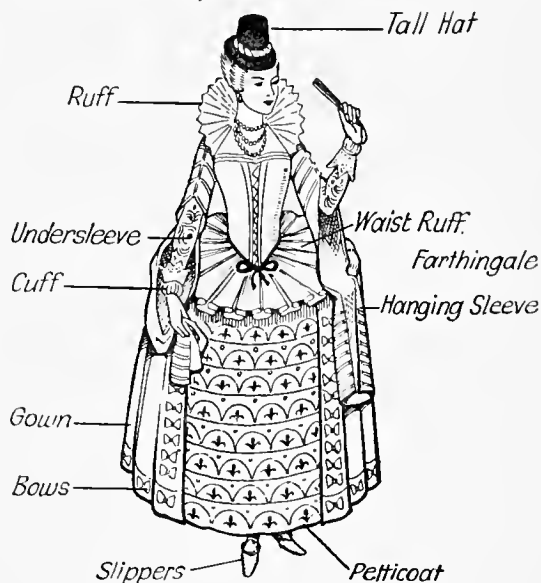
The *Ruff* (men) was starched yellow. It folded into figure eight shape and encircled the neck.

The *Collar* (men) was of white linen turned down or square and wired, but these two latter alternatives to the ruff really became general in James I's time.

The women wore a linen *Chemise*, a leather or whalebone *Corset*, and a huge wheel or hoop of whalebone called a *Farthingale*, which was attached just below the waist. Over this several *Petticoats* and two *Gowns* were worn. The cut of the gowns was fuller, but, as in the previous reign, they had hanging sleeves of lawn and cambric, or lace, stuck to the armhole of the under robe, and with a deep point to the bodice.

The *Ruff* (women) was of cambric or lawn, plain or lace edged, and if it was very large it had to be underpropped with bones. The enormous upstanding lace collar, wired to stand up at the back of the neck, came in at the close of the

reign, about 1580. There was another late variant of the circular ruff. It parted in the middle and formed a semi-circle or a heart-shape on back and shoulders only.



ELIZABETHAN LADY

## LEGS

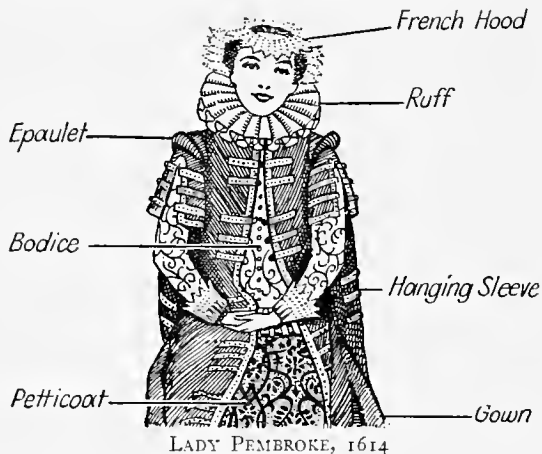
The *Trunk Hose* (men) were really breeches, much slashed, puffed, and padded. They were almost circular. They ended at mid thigh and were "paned" with decorative vertical bands. With these might be worn *Canions* (men), which were tight shorts to the knee, over which the stocking was taken. They were padded. If the trunk hose and canions were worn they were in one garment and the stockings were separate. If they were not, then the trunk hose were worn with stocking tights, which came farther up the leg, well above the knee.

*Stockings* (men) were long and came above the knee. If no canions were worn, the stockings came nearly to the fork, and were joined on to the trunk hose breeches.

## FEET

*Shoes* (men) had a high instep, buckled or rosetted, and were made in velvet, leather, and cloth.

*Slippers* (women) were of velvet or satin, which necessitated the 2 in. to 7 in. thick cork-soled *Chopines* (women) to be added for street wear.



LADY PEMBROKE, 1614

## HAIR

The *Hair* (men) was long and brushed back. They wore a pointed beard and moustache. A dandy wore on his shoulder one love lock which was delicately tied with a ribbon!

*Hair* (women) was curled and frizzed and dyed golden. It was worn high on the forehead and away from the sides of the face.

## HATS

*Hats* (men) were round or flat with soft crowns and narrow brims and a feather. A gold lace or twisted cord went round the crown. Felt, beaver, sarcenet, and velvet were the materials.

The *French Hood* (women) was much the same as in the previous reign.

The *Tall Hat* (women) was exactly like the men's tall hat—shallow brimmed, high crowned, and with a twist of material round the crown. About 1590 the veil of the French Hood was wired into arches behind the shoulders. Smaller bonnets were also worn.

## JAMES I. DRESS

*Breeches* (men) became looser and longer, and covered the knee, where they were buttoned or ribbon-tied, though the older circular type of trunk hose continued to be fashionable.

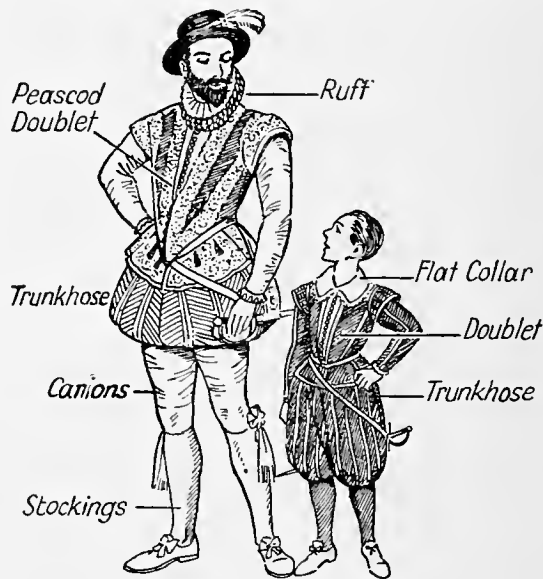
The *Ruff* (men) was succeeded by the *Whisk*

(men), a stiff semi-circular collar of lace, square in front, and wired out. The ruff remained popular, but it was not so modish. The remainder of the costume was as before.

The *Collar* (women) changed from the circular ruff to the wired lace or cambric collar standing up at the back of the neck and attached to the open neck on each side in front. It was dyed different shades, and was circular, except in front, where it was square cut. Another form, a heart shape, was in two circles at the back. This type was popularized by Elizabeth, but it became more general and smaller in James I's reign.

The *Waist Ruff* (women) came in at the close of Elizabeth's reign, and was a box pleated rectangle, tied round the waist with a bow in front and resting on the horizontal part of the skirt, which was upheld by the farthingale.

The *Petticoat* (women) was of satin, and short



SIR WALTER RALEIGH AND SON, 1602

enough to disclose the feet in their dainty satin slippers.

The *Gown* (women) had a low cut square neck opening, and tight sleeves to the elbow, from which dangled long streamers—relics of the hanging sleeves. The bodice was cylindrical and pointed, all creases being removed by the corset, and the skirt opened in front to reveal the satin petticoat. The undersleeves, which showed from elbow to



wrist, were ruffed at the wrist with small frills or were finished with cambric cuffs stitched in coloured and black thread or with lace cuffs—both were of the turn back type.

#### FEET

*Shoes* (men and women) were ribbon rosetted, and the women also wore rosettes of lace.

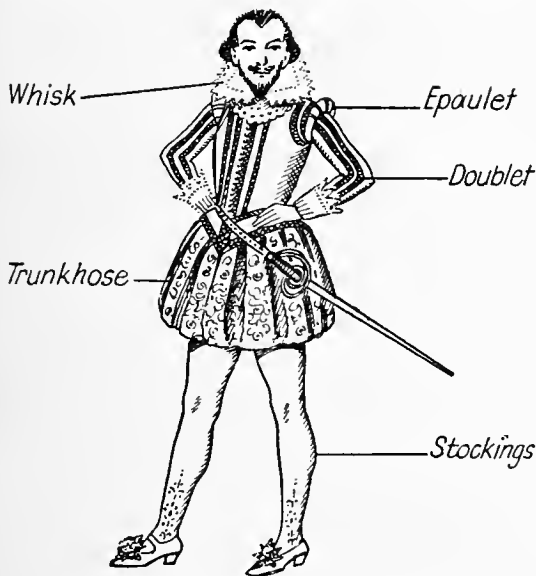
#### HAIR

*Hair* (men) was worn half-way down the neck, and was brushed back. It had the almost invariable addition of a short pointed beard and a small tuft, not joined to the beard, just below the lip, and moustaches were slightly pointed.

*Hair* (women) was dressed high and backwards from the face.

#### HATS

The *Tall Crowned Hat* (men and women) was of small black felt with a high crown and small



RICHARD SACKVILLE, LORD DORSET, 1616

brim, a cord or twisted material round the crown, and a feather starting in front and fastened with a jewel at the side. The men also wore a beaver hat with a white plume erect behind it.

#### JEWELLERY

*Jewellery*: Many necklaces, chiefly pearl, for the women, and gold chains with large rings for men. The folding fan made its appearance for the first time and displaced flag type fan.

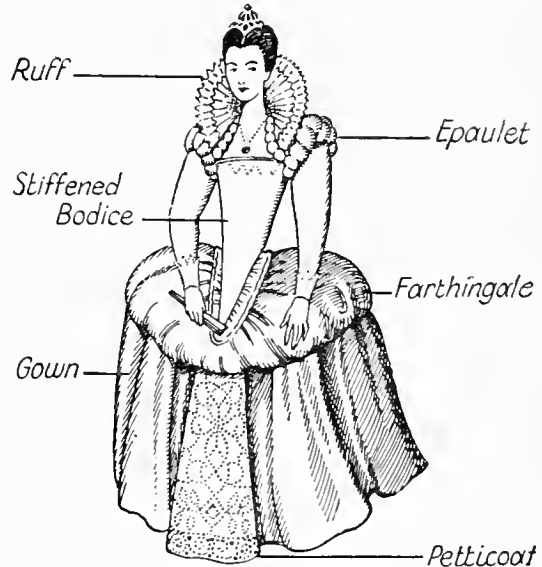
#### SUMMARY

##### MEN (ELIZABETH)

##### *Dress*

Spanish Cape—high collar.

Italian Doublet—close fit, small frill below



QUEEN ELIZABETH, 1600

waist, padded and boned to form curved convex shape pointed downwards. Sleeves differed in colour and split to show under-sleeve. Tight, long, slashed sleeve and turn-back cuff, armhole covered by epaulet. High collar, buttoned down centre or open to show vest. Vertical embroidered panels.

Ruff—yellow starched linen, figure eight shape.

Collar—white linen, turned down or square and wired.

##### *Legs*

Trunk Hose—round breeches, very full at top, end at mid-thigh; slashed, puffed, padded.

Canions—shorts, padded (1570 on).

Stockings—long to above knee.

##### *Feet*

Shoes—high instep, buckled or rosetted, leather, velvet, or cloth.

##### *Hair*

Long, brushed back, pointed beard, moustache slight. Love lock on one shoulder, ribbon tied.

*Hats*

Round or flat, soft crown, narrow brim, feathered, gold lace or twisted cord round crown. Felt, beaver, sarcenet or velvet.



JAMES I'S DAUGHTER, QUEEN OF BOHEMIA, C. 1620

## WOMEN (ELIZABETH)

*Dress*

Corset—leather or whalebone.  
Farthingale—huge bone wheel below waist.  
Petticoats—several. Chemise—linen.  
Two Gowns—hanging sleeves of lawn or cambric to underdress; general style as Henry VIII, long point to bodice.  
Ruff—cambric or lawn, plain or lace edged, underpropped if large: (1) circular; (2) semi-circular; (3) upstanding at back, round or heart shaped.

*Feet*

Slippers—velvet or satin.  
Chopines—cork soled over shoes.

*Hair*

Curled, dyed, frizzed, high on forehead and clear of sides of face.

*Hats*

French Hood—as Mary's reign.  
Tall Hat—shallow brim, high crown as men.

*Jewels*

Chains, pins, scented embroidered gloves, lace or silk handkerchiefs, flag-shaped fans in hand or girdle, masks for street and theatre.

## MEN (JAMES I)

*Dress*

Breeches—loose, cover knees where buttoned or ribbon tied.  
Rest, as above, but less slashes and padding.  
Whisk—a standing collar vice ruff.

*Feet*

Shoes—ribbon rosetted.

*Hair*

Half down neck; pointed beard; lip tuft; moustache; brushed back hair.

*Hat*

Tall crowned, wide brimmed.  
Beaver hats with white plume erect at back.



JAMES I'S QUEEN

## WOMEN (JAMES I)

*Dress*

Collar—wired lace or cambric dyed. Fans out behind.  
Waist Ruff—box pleat, tied above farthingale.  
Farthingale—huge bone wheel below waist.  
Petticoat—satin, shows feet.  
Gown—low cut square neck, open cylinder bodice, tight sleeves to elbow; from there streamers, open skirt in front to show petticoat; undersleeves to wrist where ruffed or with cambric or lace cuffs.

*Feet*

Shoes—lace rosetted.

*Hair*

High dressed.

*Hats*

Same as men, high crowned felt. No caps.

*Jewels*

Necklaces—many. Folding fan first arrived.

# COLOUR ATTRIBUTES AS AFFECTED BY STAGE LIGHTING

By ALFRED HARTOP

*Perruquier and Lecturer to Amateur Societies*

THE term "attributes of a colour" is intended to imply certain distinctive qualities and properties of each colour that govern its appropriateness for certain purposes.

Red, orange, and yellow, and combinations in which they predominate, are classified as luminous colours, and are known as warm colours because of their vivid brilliance. Of the three, it may be said that red is the most aggressive. Yellow is a vivid and bright colour, and although it does not possess the strength and warmth of red, it may be said to be the most luminous colour. Combinations of red and yellow, broken with either white or black, provide the majority of the flesh tints and shades that are usually required in make-up.

Green, blue, and violet (complementary colours to the above three), and combinations in which they predominate, are generally considered as cool colours because of their soft, retiring tones. Blue is strong and distinctive, but unlike red, which is warm and aggressive, blue is cold and retiring. In make-up, the direct use of these three colours is limited, though they may be usefully employed in blending and creating contrasts. Care should be taken in applying in its full strength not only red, but also any primary colour on account of the vivid effect that is obtained by the use of unadulterated colours.

The complement of a colour is, theoretically, a colour or colours, which when mixed with it in equal proportions will produce white. It is possible to achieve this result with visible spectrum colours, but impossible with pigments, owing to the imperfection of the colours. A mixture of the primary colours of light will tend to give white light, whereas a mixture of the same pigment colours results in dark grey. There are many pairs of complementary colours, representing the maximum of contrast in hue. The law of contrast is best illustrated when two

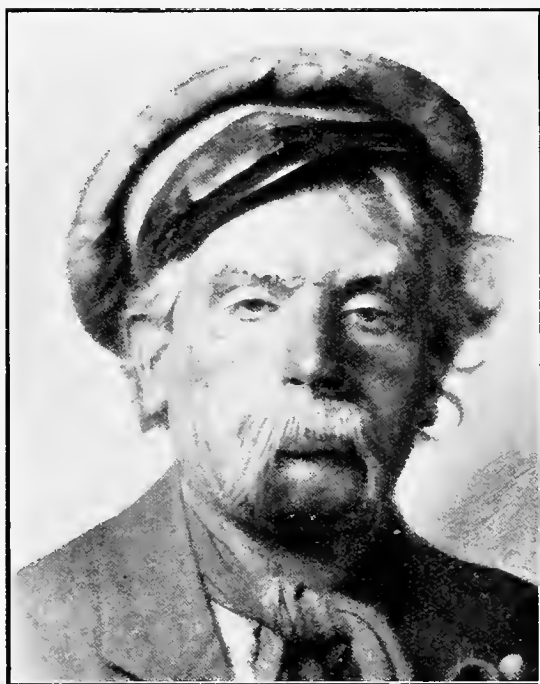
complementary colours equal in brightness are placed close together; then each complementary enhances to the greatest possible extent the brightness of its companion colour.

Contrast of colours is due to the modifications in the appearance of colours that are caused by the differences in the hue and brightness of adjacent or contiguous colours. If any two colours, differing in hue, are placed together, their difference will be increased, and each of the colours will be slightly tinged, as if mixed with the complementary of the other.

In the case of a pair of colours that differ in degree of brightness, the difference is increased when the two are brought close to each other, or, in other words, the colour that has the greater intensity of hue or brightness has these qualities enhanced; whilst the colour with a lesser degree of similar qualities will have its dullness increased by contrast with the brighter colour. Both a deeply saturated colour and a pale tint of itself, when placed together, are altered considerably; the stronger gains more power and brilliancy, and the weaker appears still feebler by contrast. For example, a pale red tint when placed beside a full red will appear much paler, whilst the full red will gain brightness. All colours in contrast with white appear at their darkest, whilst on a black ground they are seen at their lightest.

The effect of contrast is one of the utmost importance in make-up, and, in fact, in all colour schemes that are employed on the stage, since harmony and visibility, from the point of view of an audience, depend upon such considerations. To arrive at a few practical applications of the foregoing observations on contrast, consider what would be the effect upon the complexion colour and the visibility of the features when a change from light to dark colour of costume or gown is made during the action of a play. Assuming that the colour tone of the make-up was correct in the

first instance, the change in contrast between the colour of the face and the gown would, obviously, result in the face appearing considerably paler and the features weaker. An addition of colour tone would be required to remedy this defect. On the other hand, the colour tone required to correspond with a man's red or blue tunic would



*Photo by Pollard Croather*

CEDRIC HARDWICKE AS DICK VARWELL IN  
"YELLOW SANDS"

appear too heavy by contrast with the white collar and shirt-front of evening dress; and would require to be toned down with an application of powder. Further, it is not to be supposed that the same make-up colours harmonize with every colour of costume to the same degree of visibility. A prevailing tone that harmonizes with yellow wearing material will not give the same results in contrast with blue.

To meet this need of appropriate contrast between make-up and colour of costume, the best guidance is derived from a knowledge of the scheme of colour contrast known as "successive contrast." In this connexion an interesting experiment may be made by gazing intently at a red

object for a few moments or until the eye becomes fatigued. If the eye is then turned away from the red object towards a white or pale surface, a tint of bluish-green is distinctly seen. This is the accidental contrast colour of red, and is practically the same thing as its complementary colour. This phenomenon is explained by the theory that the eye is furnished with three groups of nerves which, independently, respond to the colour sensations of red, green, and violet. When the gaze is concentrated upon an object of red colour, the red nerves of the retina are highly excited by the red rays, and, on the contrary, the green and violet nerves are not to any great extent called into action. When the impression of the red object is suddenly removed, the green and violet nerves, not being fatigued, respond strongly to the stimulus given to them by the absence of red rays and the presence of light; consequently, as a result of the unusual activity of the green and violet nerves, the eye for a short time receives the impression of blue-green, the complementary of red.

If the same tone of red is repeatedly presented to the eye, the red nerves become fatigued, and fail to interpret the same degree of colour intensity, and, therefore, the colour appears to fade and to become less visible. Should the presentation of red, on the other hand, be followed by a display of blue-green, the eye more readily responds and interprets the second colour at its maximum degree of intensity and visibility, because it is the complementary colour, it may be said, that the eye is expecting to see. The simplest pairs of complementary colours, which are adaptable and most frequently met with, are—

Red	.	.	Green-blue
Blue	.	.	Orange-yellow
Green	.	.	Red-violet
Violet	.	.	Yellow-green
Yellow	.	.	Violet-blue

A make-up colour scheme that is devised on these lines will not only achieve harmony of contrast, but also a high degree of natural, unobtrusive visibility. In exactly the same way as the colour scheme of each costume should harmonize with the colour tone of the stage setting, so should make-up be a factor in definite relationship to

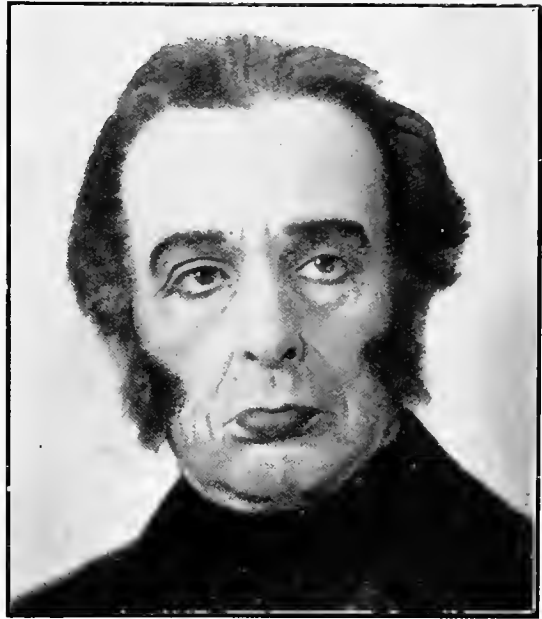
the general scheme; yet it is too often considered to be of little or no importance. As guidance in this connexion a table of examples, which will meet the majority of women's cases, is given at the foot of this page.

All coloured bodies reflect a certain proportion of white light in addition to their coloured light, and, consequently, suffer a loss of purity in this reflected mixture of white and coloured light. The nearer the surface of an object is to white, the greater is its reflecting power; the darker it is, the less will be the amount of light it can reflect. When the greatest possible degree of purity and richness, that is to say, freedom from white light, combined with a high degree of luminosity, is present in a colour, the effect on the eye is the maximum intensity of hue, or saturation. Colours appear saturated, or, in other words, are stronger, at normal or low intensities of illumination than at high intensities. This means that if a great excess of luminosity or brightness is added to a colour, its intensity of hue, or degree of saturation, is diminished. Consequently, saturation is maintained by an increase in the intensity of hue. Therefore, when stage lighting is strong all colours in make-up should be proportionately heavier.

The modifications or changes that colours undergo when they are illuminated by gas-light or other artificial light must now be considered. Although the improvements that have been made in the development of the white light of the incandescent gas-burner, and in electric lighting, have gone a long way towards the equalization of artificial light and daylight, the artificial means still has the effect of changing the hue or appearance of a colour from its characteristic hue in daylight. Artificial light obtained from different sources varies in its composition, and the tone of any particular light depends upon the proportion

and relative strengths of the colour rays that are present.

Electric light is deficient in blue rays and stronger in its general tone of yellow or red-yellow. Daylight is white, a mixture of all colour rays. Hence it follows that a coloured surface having a predominance of yellow in its composition, loses



*Photo by Folland Crowther*

CEDRIC HARDWICKE AS MOULTON BARRETT IN  
"THE BARRETT'S OF WIMPOLE STREET"

a considerable quantity of its yellow and appears pale or whitish in artificial light. Pure red, on the other hand, becomes brighter and more intense. Carmines lose their purplish tints and tend toward a purer red; vermilion inclines to a more orange-red. Blues generally suffer in purity and tend to become dull or greyish. Those

Costume Dominant Colour	Foundation Tint	Carmine Rouge	Eye Shade	Lip Colour	Powder Tint
Red . . .	Cream—No. 2½ chrome .	Carmine 2 .	Green-blue .	Medium . .	Rachael
Blue . . .	Cream—No. 2½; No. 5 .	Orange tint .	Gold-brown .	Light . . .	Rachael
Green . . .	No. 2½ . . . . .	Carmine 3 .	Violet or silver- blue . . .	Dark . . .	Natural
Violet . . .	Cream—No. 2½ No. 5; .	Orange tint .	Green . . .	Orange tint .	Rachael
Yellow . .	No. 2½ . . . . .	Carmine 2 .	Dark blue .	Medium . .	Natural

inclining to a violet cast become more violet-like; but greenish-blues have a strong tendency to become still greener in hue. Violet is much duller and more purplish, and purple inclines to a crimson-red. Greenish-yellow and yellow-greens remain fairly constant to their daylight aspect, but blue-greens become more bluish, and bluish-greys become almost indistinguishable as colour.

From these observations relating to the loss of colour due to the combined effect of the source of intensity of stage lighting, it will be obvious that information of the intensity and prevailing tone of the light and judgment in the application of sufficient colour to neutralize its effect will always be required. White electric light, when used without a colour medium, is of a cold and critical tone, revealing many flaws in careless make-up. When this form of light has to be faced, the foundation should be given a warm tone by the addition of a little extra No. 9, and the rouge perfectly blended in order to avoid sharp contrasts between pale and full colours. For the same reason, shadows and high-lights should merge into the foundation with an imperceptible graduation of tone. A too generous application of full colours should be avoided. Therefore, the cheeks, eyes, and lips will require only a minimum of colour discriminately applied.

#### COLOURED LIGHT

Obviously, the chief requirement of brilliant stage illumination is to make the actors, costumes, and properties visible to the audience. Combinations of white and coloured light are required to represent the light tints of nature, such as sunlight, twilight, moonlight, etc.; also, to pale or to brighten a scene, transforming it from cold to warm tone, or vice versa. Colour lighting is now recognized as an emotional language, like music, with power to induce and maintain psychological moods in an audience. Suggestive colour is employed as an aid to the creation of the required atmosphere of a play and to give emphasis to the

action, whilst gorgeous scenic illusions and effects are produced by the beauty of changing coloured light.

The effect of coloured light is to make still greater changes and modifications in the appearance of colour, whether of costume or make-up. A make-up that would be adequate when playing in white or pale light would need to be almost impressionistic in high-lights and shadows to show up in dark amber or blue light. It is not possible to set down any definite rules to meet a particular colour of light; yet a consideration of the general trend of the changes that take place will assist the necessary judgment when the lighting scheme is known.

Pale tints of straw, pink, or amber, are of a warmer and kinder tone than white, and, therefore, are less critical and do not change colours to any great extent. Intense reds will incline slightly to orange, and blues and greens will be less bright.

Medium and dark red light is aggressive, and will spoil greens and change blue to dark grey. Flesh tints in this colour should incline to cream rather than pink, red should be in sharp contrast, and green-blue or gold-blue should be substituted for dark blue.

Dark amber is drastic in its action; it reduces flesh tints and reds considerably in tone and gives them an orange cast. Blue and greens are completely changed to grey. In these cases it is an advantage to use a paler foundation of a pink tone, carmine-vermilion rouge for cheeks and lips, silver-blue eye shade, with heavy black eyelashes.

When lighting schemes are heavy or bizarre, the audience will not expect to see the same clarity of features and expression, and under these conditions, which are usually of a temporary nature, little change from the usual tone of make-up is advisable. Blue frequently gives the greatest trouble, and when playing in this colour the usual full colours, such as rouge and eye shades, may be omitted and put on for a subsequent scene if this is found necessary owing to a change of lighting.

## SWITCHBOARDS

By C. HAROLD RIDGE, A.R.S.M., D.I.C., and F. S. ALDRED, A.M.Inst.C.E.  
*Consulting Engineers*

PROFESSIONAL electricians like to have a switch that is easy to grasp in a hurry. A quick-break knife-switch, as shown in Fig. 43, is used on a live-front board. On a dead-front board, a back-of-board switch is used. It is operated, through insulated links, by the handle on the front of the panel. Fig. 44 is an illustration

it, is seen in the centre. The open type quick-break knife-switches are arranged in three rows. The "positive" fuses are above them and the "negative" fuses are grouped below. The first and third rows consist of twelve 30-ampere switches each; the second row has nine of these and one single-pole 300-ampere main switch for

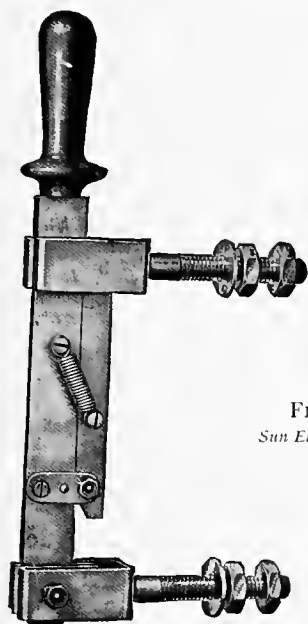


FIG. 43  
*Sun Electrical Co.*

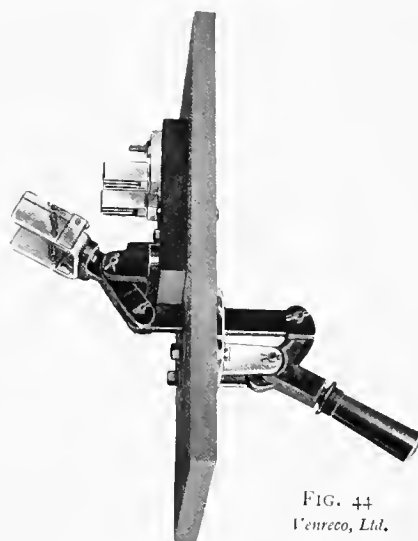


FIG. 44  
*Veneco, Ltd.*

of such a switch of 30-ampere capacity. Both patterns make a clicking noise in operation, but unless the stage is small and the switchboard close to it, the noise will hardly be noticed in the auditorium.

The dimmers should always be connected in the negative side of the circuit between the lamps and the negative fuse. At the Festival Theatre, Cambridge, they are mounted on a separate frame away from the actual switchboard, as is seen in Fig. 45. The supply to this board is single phase A.C. at 200 volts. The switch panel with a voltmeter, an ammeter, and a pilot lamp above

stage black-out purposes. The switches are grouped according to the apparatus they control, and not in colour groups. The dimmers for the auditorium decorative lighting, and the front-of-house focus lanterns, are on the right of the switch panel, and to the left are seen two additional banks of these dimmers, of the slider type, controlling the cyclorama lighting and main stage lighting. They correspond in order to the switches.

For ease of working and increased possibilities of lighting control, it is highly desirable to have a dimmer in every circuit, as at the Cambridge Festival Theatre, but as "Little" theatres can rarely afford such a luxury, the number may be limited to those circuits in which a dimmer

is considered to be essential, leaving the remaining circuits to be directly switched "on" and "off."

It is, however, possible, by arranging similar total lamp wattage in the different circuits for a dimmer of that wattage to be arranged for "plugging" into any individual circuit, and after

carrying the electric wiring for the external circuits can be screwed. Slack wire can be left in this trough if desired. The wires are brought out of the trough through bushed holes for connexion to terminal blocks on the board. The wires can be brought direct to their respective fuses and series sockets, but the provision of terminal

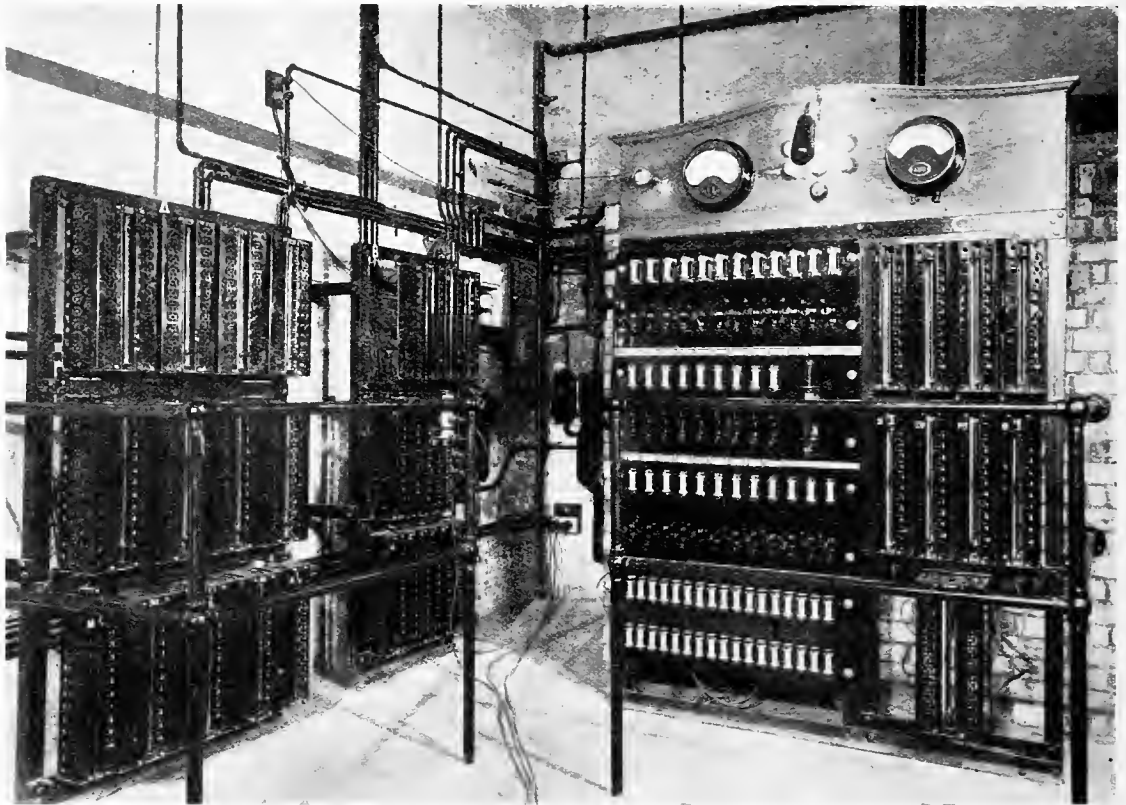


FIG. 45

*Veneco, Ltd.*

controlling that circuit as required to be transferred to another circuit.

Fig. 46 shows a simple and an inexpensive switchboard designed on these lines to control ten 1500-watt and fourteen 1000-watt circuits, and using only three slider type dimmers of the larger and five of the smaller size. In the hands of an intelligent operator, this arrangement, at a minimum of cost, provides full and effective control of all the circuits. At the top is fixed a trough of sheet metal, into which the conduits

blocks makes it easier to manufacture and to wire the board ready for connecting up by people who are inexperienced in stage work. If possible, such a board should be mounted well away from a wall so that access to back connexions is practicable. If the board is not mounted in this way it can be fixed direct to the wall, where the panels will be unbolted and brought forward far enough to reach the terminals and to make the necessary connexions.

This type of switchboard was installed in a





theatre and was fed from a three-wire D.C. supply at 440 volts across the outer wires. The lighting circuits were, therefore, connected between each outer and the middle wire, and 220-volt lamps were used. Each panel was connected across opposite sides of the system, and the circuits were arranged to give an approximate

installation may be dimmed out, or alternatively brought into full operation. Independent operation can dim out one-half of the lights, and raise the other half, whilst operation in conjunction with the individual slider-type dimmers allows intimate and refined control, which is soon appreciated by the operator.

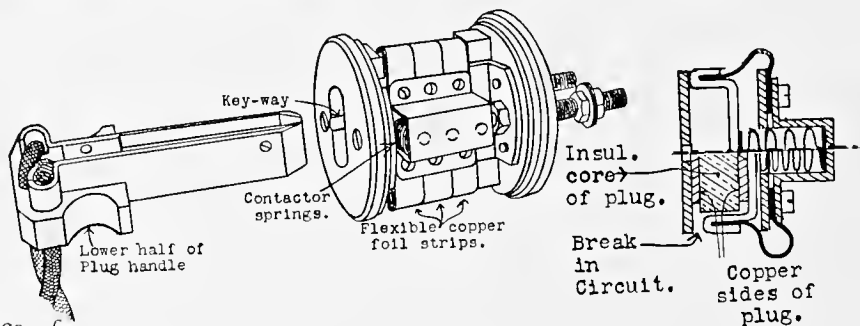


FIG. 47

London Instrument Co., Cambridge

balance of the

conditions, as required.

In a small room, each stage lighting dimmer was placed, each company. To carry the full working current, two liquid pole contactor type switches were also on the board to which it was connected. On each side of this room, one being connected with each pole wire running from the Intake Room to its bus on the back of the switchboard, and shown in dotted lines, behind the fuses. The switches for the contactor coil circuits are 5-ampere tumbler pattern, "all insulated" type. They can be seen at the top inner corners of each panel. The circuit switches are of the same type, but of 10-ampere capacity. The contactor coil circuits are fed from the live side of the contactors through fuses to the  $\pm$  terminal on the live side of the liquid dimmers, the latter being connected in the mains and operated by tracker-wire control from the switchboard.

The opening of either contactor puts out all lamps that are fed from the respective bus-bar. A total black-out results when the two contactors are opened simultaneously. They are placed in the room away from the stage to prevent the noise that they make on operation being heard. The provision of a liquid dimmer in each half greatly increases the control possibilities. When they are operated together the whole lighting

Where cost is a serious consideration, a switchboard designed on these lines is almost ideal. In the hands of a capable and intelligent person it can be made to meet all the artistic requirements in connexion with the lighting installation of a "Little" theatre.

The individual dimmers are mounted below the switch panels, and are not connected to any other circuit, their terminals being connected by a length of Cabtyre flexible cable, terminating in a "Lico" plug, and long enough to allow the plug to be inserted into any "Lico" socket on the wall. This allows the dimmers to be operated without flicker, as they make contact with the three distinct contactor springs. The plug is made of insulating material, with copper strips at each side, and when it is inserted into the sockets the three contactor springs are compressed successively into the position shown in the lower half of the sectional view, thus breaking gradually the original circuit, and causing the current to flow through the apparatus connected to the plug—in our case a dimmer.

## MACHINERY NOISES

By A. E. PETERSON

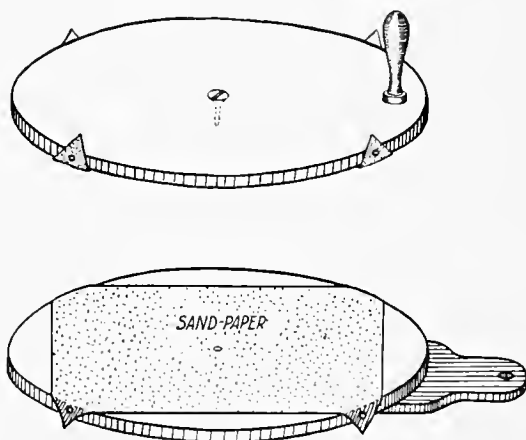
*Founder, Sunday Night Adventurers; Secretary, Kingston Marionette Players, etc.*

INTERESTING experiments in the search for "sound" effects to suggest machinery at work have been made by producers, and some remarkable results have been obtained by using specially prepared gramophone records and passing the sound through amplifiers and loud speakers. It is not necessary, however, to go to much expense to provide this class of noise effect. It is quite easy to imitate the sounds one hears in a factory or mill, on board ship or in an aeroplane, and the producer should endeavour to convey by means of subtle suggestion noises that an audience will readily associate with the scene that is being played on the stage.

All noise made by machinery is rhythmic. It has a regular beat, and by listening closely to the real sound one can identify a rhythm that can be translated into vocal sounds and imitated by anyone with imagination. The noise of heavy machinery at work sounds like "thud hiss thud hiss thud hiss." Light machinery seems to have a galloping sound that consists of a continuous pinga-ponga-pinga-ponga-pinga-ponga-pinga-ponga, etc. Then there is the sound that seems to have a stutter in its composition, and pimpompompom-pimpompompom-pimpompompom-pimpompompom is the result. A further impression is that of clip . . . clop . . . clip . . . clop . . . the interval between the "clip" and the "clop" being bridged by the hiss of escaping steam.

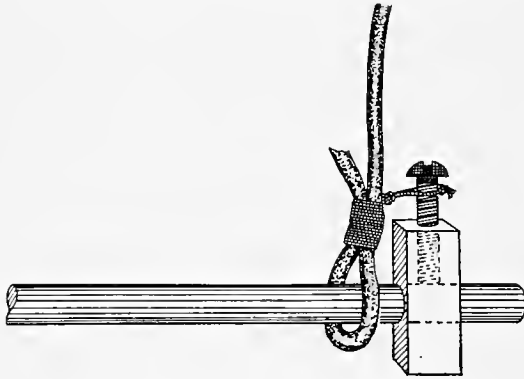
The clip . . . clop type of noise can be obtained by striking a suitable sounding wooden box or empty tea-chest with a padded mallet or drumstick, first on the side and then on the bottom. The hiss of steam between the blows is supplied by rubbing together two pieces of glass or sand paper held between rubbing pads such as woodworkers use. Boxes of various sizes and thicknesses, metal containers, such as petrol tins or oil cylinders, and pieces of different metal struck with a hammer, wire brushes, or specially constructed tappers will supply a sufficient variety of sounds that can be fitted to any rhythm that meets our need.

The noise of steam escaping, if the duration of time is not long, can be suggested by allowing the wind to escape slowly from the inner tube of a motor-car tyre that has been inflated to capacity. If the hiss of steam is to be continuous for some time a useful piece of apparatus can be made by cutting two circular discs of plywood, half to



three-quarters of an inch thick, with a diameter of not more than ten inches, and mounting on these discs two sheets of glass or sand paper. A sheet of glass paper measures twelve inches by ten inches, which enables the glass paper to be fixed at the corners by drawing-pins to the edge of the plywood disc. The top disc has a screw an inch and a half long, driven through the centre and countersunk, and the bottom disc has a hole bored through it in which the screw works loosely. The upper disc has a strong, reliable handle with which to turn it. The apparatus can be hung up in a convenient place where it will be out of the way. As glass or sand paper soon wears out a plentiful supply should be at hand. A wind machine fitted with a "shrill" canvas will give a steam sound, or in place of the canvas, long strips of sand paper such as are used in sand-papering machines, can be substituted, with good results.

In a small hall a bicycle will supply many useful noises that will assist in creating the illusion of machinery at work. The suggestion of a lift humming its way up or down, or the far away drone of an aeroplane, can be produced by turning the bicycle upside down and rapidly pedalling by hand. The back wheel should be fitted with a



SPINDLE OF ELECTRIC FAN FITTED WITH SPECIAL COLLAR, AND METHOD OF SECURING ELECTRIC WIRE STRIKER

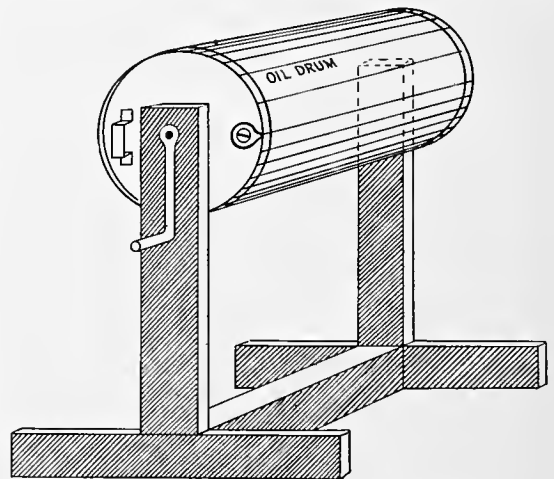
tyre that is well studded and not worn, and by holding the edge of a stout piece of cardboard against the tyre a humming sound is produced that may be varied by the speed at which the wheel is turned.

A "vibration" noise can be obtained by holding against the spokes of the wheel a piece of cardboard, a pliable lath or cane, or similar material, and by moving the vibrator across the spokes as the wheel spins round the tone can be varied.

The steady hum of a dynamo can be suggested by removing the dust bag from a vacuum cleaner and holding one of the small rubber tyred wheels against the back wheel of a bicycle that is slowly pedalled. Two persons are needed to work this effect; one to hold the vacuum cleaner and the other to pedal the cycle, which, as before, must be upside down. If it is possible to obtain one of the large electrically-driven vacuum cleaners, such as are used in cinemas, public buildings, etc., this will, with the end of the dust container removed, provide a satisfactory imitation of a motor-car engine when it is running. An engine backfiring may be suggested by firing blank cartridges into an empty tin box or tank.

Another valuable aid to the inventive producer

is an ordinary electric fan, which can be set to run at different speeds and tilted at almost any angle. Noise is obtained by holding against the revolving blades of the fan the end of a piece of rubber tubing, electric wire cable, or thick window cord. Care must be taken not to use any material that will damage the fan whilst it is in use. It is also wise to remove the guard. This is done by taking out the small screws that hold the back legs of the fan guard to the casing of the motor. In some designs of fan these screws hold in position one of the end-bearing plates of the motor. In such cases the motor and casing should be held firmly whilst the screws are being removed. They should be carefully replaced as soon as the guard is clear. Some producers prefer to use the fan after it has had the blades removed. In this case when the small screw that pierces the collar of the fan has been released, the blades should slide off the spindle without trouble. A separate collar must be provided. This should be fitted with a long securing screw that protrudes about three-quarters of an inch when the collar is firmly screwed in position. The collar shown in the



METAL CYLINDER CONTAINING LEAD SHOT

illustration was made of brass, and was about an inch square by half an inch thick. The screw should be a round-headed metal thread screw. By looping a piece of single electric cable round the spindle behind the collar, and fastening it below the round-headed portion of the retaining screw, the apparatus is made ready for use. It is an

improvement if a small wooden ball is slotted on the cable, and this may be held in position by doubling back, for a quarter of an inch, the free end of the cable, tying and countersinking it so that the end is well inside the ball. When in action the wooden ball as it whirls round is brought into contact with the surface of a piece of plywood, tin, cardboard, or an empty box. In a production of Elmer Rice's play, *See Naples and Die*, the recurring noise of motor-cycles whizzing past was made by "playing" the ball across a bass drum. The suggestion of distance was obtained by working the ball around the edge of the drum and then, by suddenly playing the ball from the edge to the centre and back again the noise of the motor speeding past was very real. In some theatres this device is used to suggest aeroplanes. In a production of Wm. Archer's *The Green Goddess* a battery of three fans and drums supplied the terrifying roar of a flight of aeroplanes circling round and round, and was far more impressive than another experiment that was carried out with the aid of three or four motor-cycles, the engines of which supplied the noise. A small drumstick may be used in place of the electric cable but a piece of ordinary electric wire, such as is used to wire houses, is admirable for the purpose. Six to eight inches of wire is sufficient and the fan should be run at low speed for a few seconds before being opened out to full. Window cord is a useful substitute, but ordinary string or twine is useless, because immediately the spindle begins to revolve the string either twists around the spindle or twists and breaks in the middle.

When the fan is being operated it is wise to have the base securely fixed, and the piece of plywood, or whatever material is used, gently brought to bear on the striker as it hurtles round. In place of the drum the vellum and metal rims of an old banjo, or a tambourine, with the small cymbals removed from their slots, will answer the purpose and will not be expensive to replace in case of accident.

There are many other methods of producing noises to imitate machinery at work. The apparatus usually consists of a striker or plunger, balanced between supports, and sprung to the base. A toothed or eccentric wheel, or a series of paddles moving round, lift and drop a plunger, which, in falling, strikes against a brass tube, a

sheet of metal, or a piece of hard wood. The simpler the apparatus, the more effective it seems to be, and the audience should never be allowed to discover how the particular effect is obtained. Once they know, the effect is spoilt, and instead of hearing the chatter of machinery through the subdued hiss of steam, those "in the know" visualize one of the lady members of the cast slowly working a sewing machine while another person turns a metal cylinder that contains two or three pounds of fine gauge lead shot.

It is always possible, of course, that we may be faced with the problem of having to stage a scene in which it is necessary to show machinery at work. It may be a scene like that in O'Neill's play, *Dynamo*, where one sees the interior of a power station and a gigantic dynamo, which, although stationary, conveyed a sense of movement by the constant hum of the motors, or it may be some fantastic setting like that used in *The Insect Play*. Whatever kind of design is decided upon it should be as simple as possible; otherwise there is the risk of playing into the hands of some cynical reporter whose criticism may suggest that the settings were designed by Heath Robinson. It is wise to have a working model made to scale, and if when the set has been constructed the movements can be made by someone standing at the back of the set or anywhere else out of sight of the audience during the actual performance it is an advantage. Any kind of material will do; even on the professional stage some of the most impressive machines are miracles of cardboard cylinders with plywood pistons that turn massive flywheels built of canvas or strong paper fastened to or pasted around a wire framework.

An effect of this kind was used in a recent spectacular revue. The scene represented a factory where human beings were produced by machinery. The entire stage was cumbered with gigantic wheels that moved slowly and small wheels that revolved at a rapid rate. The large wheels were kept moving by stage hands stationed at the back, and the small wheels were operated by an endless rope that passed round the spindle or axle of each wheel and was pulled from the wings. Two men were required to work the apparatus, one to pull the rope that revolved the wheels and the other carefully to pull back the

loose bight of rope and at the same time pay out and guide the rope over the spindle of the first wheel of the set. The suggestion of a furnace door opening and closing was supplied by a red flood, and the noises off were provided by two men beating with a regular beat two drums differently toned. A ship's bell and a long iron tube received occasional blows, and a noise of steam escaping was produced by a cylinder of compressed air fitted with a megaphone arrangement for amplification. A smoke-pot giving off a white smoke supplied visual steam.

The majority of plays that are staged in modern Russia are of necessity of a propagandist nature, and travellers who have returned report that the theatres and cinemas are packed to capacity every night. The type of play produced is dictated by the particular needs of the moment. If there is a shortage of agricultural tractors then a play dealing with the subject is written; if there is a need to explain some measure that imposes an additional burden on the workers then a play is written that shows the benefits that will accrue in good time. Three or four years ago a play called *Oil* was written around an idea that was to revolutionize the petroleum industry. It was suggested that synthetic rubber could be obtained from the by-products, and as the play progressed the treatment of crude petroleum was shown from the moment it emerged from the earth until the final processes. Real machinery was shown on the stage and, in

addition, a large orchestra of "sound" makers accompanied the scene with appropriate "sound rhythms" specially written for the occasion.

A fine description of machinery at work on the stage is that contained in the third scene of the fifth act of Toller's play, *The Machine Wreckers*. The play is translated from the German by Ashley Dukes, and is published by Messrs. Benn Brothers, Ltd. The scene opens and we see "The factory by moonlight, with a gigantic steam engine and mechanical looms, at which women and a few children are seated. . . ." Then "Amid the sounds of machinery are heard the hum of the transmitters, the clear tone of the running crankshafts, the deep rumble of the levers, and the regular whirr and rattle of the shuttles. . . ." A child falls asleep at her loom and is wakened by the overseer's strap. A government representative arrives and is shown the factory. Soon after a mob arrives armed with picks and shovels, and eventually "The door is forced. . . ." In a few moments "The mob see the engine. They are overwhelmed with wonder and stand transfixed. . . ." The engineer orders the steam to be turned off, and "The engine stops." He then harangues the mob and ". . . pulls a lever. With a sound like a human sigh the machinery begins to work." The engine is stopped again, restarted, and finally wrecked by the frenzied mob, to the accompaniment of heavy peals of thunder from the storm that is raging outside.

# THE AUDIENCE AND THE PLAY

By DUMAYNE WARNE

*Author (with Phil Forsyth) of "The House," "The Ultimate Revue," "Second Thoughts," etc.*

AFTER a course of training lasting, perhaps, several months, and culminating in a Dress Rehearsal that has been encouraging without being suspiciously effortless, it may be felt that nothing further is required to assure the success of the production.

But there is one other thing. This is an audience.

There is no such thing as a successful production without an audience, for an audience adds something to a play which the company themselves cannot add.

Since this is generally realized, it is the more extraordinary that certain amateur societies do not take greater care to ensure that nothing shall happen to the audience, when they arrive at the theatre, which may prejudice them against the performance, and so cause them to withhold their contribution, rather than to bring it eagerly and enthusiastically, to the evening's success.

There are several points that require attention. The audience will take them for granted when they are properly done and will take notice only if, by chance, one of them happens to be overlooked. These points are, for the most part, extremely small and, in the professional theatre, or in the big society that has been in existence for a long time and has therefore a regular machinery that comes into operation during the performances, they will receive attention automatically, as will every other phase of the production. Nevertheless, the omission to attend to one of these minor matters may have a deep effect on the spirit in which the audience receive the play, especially if the omission militates against their comfort.

In a professional theatre the business of showing the audience to their seats, and providing them with programmes, chocolates, etc., is efficiently done by the paid staff. For amateur performances this is usually undertaken by members of the society, of either sex, according to the duty required. In some cases, those responsible for booking the theatre are obliged, by the contract,

to engage the programme sellers, etc., ordinarily attached to the theatre. When this happens, there is nothing more to be said. With a modicum of supervision to see that they are, in fact, carrying out their duties, the permanent staff will do the work in their usual way with the minimum of trouble to everybody concerned.

When the entire arrangements for the "front of the house," as it is called, are in the hands of members of the society, there are several details to be borne in mind, the observance of which will make a great deal of difference to the comfort of the audience and which may, therefore, affect their attitude towards the performance.

The ordinary playgoer expects, on arriving at the theatre, to be able to dispose of his hat, if he is so minded, in comfort; then to proceed, without being jostled about, to his seat, which he expects to have found for him; and to be able to secure a programme without delay.

It is not, as a rule, difficult to find ladies and gentlemen who are willing to undertake the duties of stewards and programmer-sellers at a performance given by an amateur operatic society; in fact, to many of them this is the next best thing to taking part in the production itself, for they are enabled to participate in it, to a certain extent, by undertaking this work.

Unfortunately, however, there *are* members who do not give their services entirely to help the society. Some do the work merely to see the play without being obliged to pay for a seat, and others so that they may have a good time. The intentions of the first of these groups are easily thwarted by passing a rule that no one can be a steward or programme seller who does not dispose of tickets of a certain value for the production. Then if they do their duties adequately, it does not matter if the front of the house staff enjoy themselves so long as they do not annoy the audience by so doing.

The difficulty is that a certain proportion of them do not carry out their duties adequately.

Programme-sellers talk to their friends, so that some members of the audience are unable to secure programmes, or else they have to wait, and sometimes they do not succeed in acquiring one until after the curtain has been raised, by which time they cannot read it owing to the darkness. Stewards are often careless when showing people to their seats. Nothing is more calculated to cause a member of the audience annoyance than to ask him to change his seat at a theatre, especially if the performance has started. Finally, both stewards and programme-sellers sometimes conspire to commit one of the greatest nuisances that an audience can well have to endure. This is whispering and laughing in the theatre during the performance. Their conversation is usually punctuated by constant openings and shuttings of the doors to the auditorium as parties of them pass to and fro, with the result that beams of light, which are a further distraction, are caused to fall across the seats.

One cannot be too overbearing with voluntary workers, but a few simple rules laid down at the beginning, with the clear understanding that they will be enforced, may have the effect of curbing the activities of some who, under the pretext of helping the society, are actually doing it an inestimable amount of harm.

#### RULES FOR STEWARDS AND PROGRAMME-SELLERS

Among suitable rules for programme-sellers are—

1. They should know exactly what they have to do: that is, whether they have to sell programmes *and* show members of the audience into their seats, or whether they have to sell programmes only.

2. They should know exactly where they are to sell the programmes: that is to say, whether they are to be responsible for a section of the auditorium, or whether they are to stand at the door and sell programmes to the audience as they enter. They should in any case be provided with some small change.

3. They must not talk, in a manner that interferes with their duties or with the enjoyment of members of the audience, to anyone, whether personal friend or fellow member of the front of the house staff.

For the stewards the following are suitable—

1. They should know the exact position of each seat in the block for which they are responsible, and should be able to find it in the dark. They, also the programme-sellers, may be provided with electric torches, which they should use with discretion.

2. See rule 3 above.

The subject of dress, or uniform, is of interest. For the men evening dress is usual, and some kind of badge is an advantage, as it enables the audience to distinguish the officials in case of emergency. The ladies' dresses are much more difficult to settle. It is undesirable that they should be put to the expense of buying a uniform, but if they are allowed *carte blanche* difficulties are certain to occur. A suggestion is that all should be asked to wear black dresses and be permitted to adorn them with furs, flowers, and jewellery. A badge for ladies is also an advantage.

Properly and tactfully done, the stewarding and programme-selling can make an enormous difference to the comfort of the audience, and if they are comfortable there is no reason why, at any rate until the curtain goes up, they should not feel well disposed towards the production.

#### THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

On the opening night of a production it is usual to begin with the National Anthem, and on subsequent performances to end with it.

This is often extremely badly played. There appears to be no reason why it should be so, and it seems to be bad policy, even if the audience have been placed comfortably in their seats, to begin the evening, especially at a musical entertainment, with an extremely indifferent rendering of an air with which everyone in the house is particularly well acquainted. It can produce only the most gloomy forebodings of what is to follow.

If the musicians who are to accompany the performance are not accustomed to playing together, they should rehearse the National Anthem in the same way as they do the rest of the music for the production.

Another minor way in which the audience may be prevented from developing a prejudice against a performance before the rise of the curtain is to see that the advertised time of beginning the



play bears some relation to that at which it actually starts.

Some members of a theatre audience always arrive late. As they are, apparently, quite prepared to suffer the penalty of missing part of the performance there is no reason why the opening should be delayed for them. The fact that they inconvenience a few other people in reaching their seats is unimportant in comparison with the much greater number who are inconvenienced by the late start of the play. Waiting until the audience are in, before ringing-up, starts a vicious circle of the management waiting for the audience, and the audience not bothering to arrive in time because they know that the curtain will rise late.

It is legitimate to begin the overture within a minute or two of the advertised time of the beginning of the play, and except in special circumstances, such as a bad fog suddenly descending on the town, this is the only concession that should ever be made. A society's audience will soon learn that if a play is billed to start at a certain time, it will start at that time, or within a few minutes of it, and they will take steps to arrive suitably early. Besides being a kind of breach of faith, a late start suggests gross mismanagement behind the curtain.

#### APPLAUSE AND ENCORES

Most of what has been said up to this point has been directed to ensuring the comfort of the audience so that they may be encouraged to enjoy the performance. If all the measures that have been adopted are successful, and the production is of such a standard as to merit it, the audience will enjoy themselves and will indicate their pleasure by applause.

Applause is the audience's method of indicating their approval of a play or part of a play, and, if it is sufficiently enthusiastic and insistent, may be accepted as an expression of desire to see that particular part of the play repeated. In other words, encores should be given as the result of a demand for them. This is a point that seems to be seriously misunderstood by the managements of many amateur operatic societies, especially, curiously enough, by small societies with a marked paucity of talent.

Many societies seem to have not the remotest notion of what encores are for and when they

should be given. One has seen cases where the company have repeated a number unasked, and sometimes unwanted, when the only reason for the repetition was that, in some former production, the number had been a success. But this is not a sufficient excuse. The spontaneous request of the audience should be the only reason for giving an encore. The fact that an actor has to sing a famous and popular song does not entitle him automatically to an encore. He must earn it by his ability and the strength of his personality, and if at the end of the song there is not a genuine demand for it the encore should not be given. The unwanted encore is one of the most obvious signs of amateur production and one that does more than anything else to earn for a society the name of being self-satisfied.

This does not mean that encores should not be arranged. They should. But however carefully they have been worked out, they should never be given unless the audience ask for them. Persuading the audience to ask for them is one of the duties of the company, and they can carry it out only by means of their personalities, efficiency, and zeal.

Confusion exists in some cases as to who is responsible for deciding when an encore is desired by the audience. The proper person to decide is the stage-manager. If the producer is acting as stage-manager, then the decision rests with him. It should *not* be the musical director, because the musical director is not in a position to see that the company do not leave the stage as each particular item finishes, nor, probably, does he know if the play is running correctly to the time schedule.

#### PROPER PROCEDURE

The proper procedure is for the stage-manager, if he thinks an encore may be required, immediately to give an order that no one may leave the stage without his permission. At the same time, he should signal "stand by" to the musical director. When the applause is at its height he should signal to the musical director to proceed and send the company (or the soloist) on to the stage again. It is of vital importance that if an encore is given it should be taken up promptly.

However well an item is received, the players are strongly recommended to proceed as though

they intended to go on with the play. Waiting on the stage in a perfunctory attitude for the applause to die down tends to have an adverse influence on the audience and is known as "asking for an encore."

While on the subject of encores and applause, it is worth while to discuss the presentation of floral and other tributes to the members of the company at the fall of the curtain on the final night of the production.

In the professional theatre, at the end of the run of a play, it is usual for some of the leading characters to receive flowers from their admirers. This does not seem to be any excuse for the ceremonies that take place after almost all amateur productions, however short the run. That it is pleasant for the leading characters to receive flowers cannot be denied, but in most cases the matter goes beyond the bounds of common sense. In some societies, when the final performance is over, and in full view of the audience, a procession of stewards, extending the entire length of the auditorium, pass from hand to hand flowers, chocolates, and other presents, to every member of the cast. This procedure may take any time up to an hour, and at the end of it the stage resembles a florist's or fruiterer's shop window, rather than a place of theatrical entertainment.

The inconvenience caused by such an arrangement has only to be indicated to be imagined. Apart from the doubt as to whether the audience are interested in the ceremony, there is the objection of certain members being obliged to buy expensive presents that they cannot afford, and the jealousies of principals who receive a few flowers, while popular members of the chorus are loaded with rich gifts.

Once the habit of giving presents in front of the curtain has been formed, it is difficult to break it without causing serious disappointment, but

new societies are earnestly advised to forbid such presentations until after the curtain has fallen, if they are permitted to take place at all. But even this practice should be prevented if possible. The only scheme to which there can be little or no objection is the placing of presents in one another's dressing-rooms by members of the cast.

As an amusing example of the kind of abuse to which presentations over the footlights may lead, a case within my knowledge may be quoted. The leading man of a provincial operatic society, on the afternoon of the final performance of a play, bought himself a ready-made shirt and some socks, in the town, and ordered them to be delivered to the theatre. In the evening, amid the rapturous applause of the audience, these were solemnly handed to him on the stage by a steward.

There is one section of the audience to which, perhaps, special reference should be made. This section is composed of the representatives of the Press. It is not suggested that any attempt should be made to influence their opinions by lavishing hospitality upon them, but some societies go to the other extreme.

Newspaper reporters are human beings, just as much as are the members of the company. Therefore, they are more likely to think ill of a performance when they are cold and thirsty than when they are warm and comfortable. It is senseless to put a premium on the chance of their being unnecessarily severe on the production because they are uncomfortable, from the mere failure to attend to their welfare.

Proper consideration for its ambassadors is a sort of delicate compliment to the newspaper itself. *Two* tickets, by the way, should always be sent to any journal whose representative it is desired to invite, and they should always be addressed to the Editor.

## TENORS WHO MUST ACT

By D. GRAHAM DAVIS

Editor of "The Gilbert and Sullivan Journal"

ONE would not expect a singer who is expert in the *bel canto* or florid styles called for in French and Italian opera to be the ideal exponent of the *Heldentenor* of Wagner's works. The types belong to separate art forms, each individual and distinct, and each calling for widely different technique. So it must be with the Sullivan tenor. He, too, must bring to his work something that is not found in other operatic tenor types. Essentially the true Sullivan tenor is a lyric singer, free from any vocal mannerisms, and one who can give all due regard to vocalism without sacrifice of clarity of diction. However beautifully a Sullivan air may be sung, as a piece of music, it will go for nothing if every word—more, every syllable—be not crystal clear. By now, possibly, the reader will have grown tired of this reiteration about diction. Yet it is so important that it cannot be too strongly stressed, and it is frequently the case that a tenor, striving for vocal effect and purity of tone, will tend to lose this all-important quality. Our tenor, too, must forget the existence of the juvenile lead of musical comedy; that sometimes romantic, sometimes back-boneless, figure with (all too often) an affected style (or should it be "staile"? ) of speech and a penchant for singing songs of "lurv to yew." Not to put too fine a point on it, the amateur tenor to whose "vocal villainies" the Mikado so pointedly refers cannot hope for success in Gilbert and Sullivan opera.

That brings us to the popular theory that no tenor can act—a theory with which Gilbert is supposed to have expressed his agreement with some vehemence. There may be some slight substratum of truth to this statement, as there usually is to all generalizations. But, on the whole, this is little less than a libel. Tenors are not so many as are baritones, but they number in their ranks excellent actors. Gilbert, for all his bad opinion of tenors, wrote parts that need good acting, and, what is more, he liberally endowed the parts with humour. This is not

often noticeable in the writing of the parts; yet it will be seen that a light, humorous touch is needed far more than the sighing and yearning of so many operatic tenors. These parts are all vital and sincere; there is nothing soulful about the types portrayed.

THE DEFENDANT (*Trial by Jury*) serves as a good illustration of the type covered by the Sullivan tenor. This is the part of a gay young spark, a bit of a bounder, but never a cad. For all his Don Juan-like propensities, the audience must feel sympathy towards the character. After his first apprehensive entrance, the Defendant is quite at his ease, and by no means overawed by the majesty of the law. All this will be helped if the player combines ease of bearing with a pleasant personality, while a decided sense of comedy will also aid in giving a convincing and satisfactory picture. Yet one might think, as there is no spoken dialogue, that an excellent singer would suffice. That is by no means the case; the Defendant must, first and foremost, be a singing actor.

ALEXIS POINTDENTRE (*The Sorcerer*) is so devoid of humour that it is not important for the actor to possess this useful adjunct. Even a naturally stiff, rather stilted attitude will not detract from the part. Alexis believes himself to be a keen social reformer; actually he is a snob of the first water. He has just that amount of charm which stops him from being a most unpleasant young man. He is sincere enough; it is the way in which he goes about his self-appointed reforming, and his condescension, which makes him so ridiculous. There should be no attempt to stress the priggish side of the character. Towards Aline his attitude is gently domineering; with Mr. Wells he adopts a pose of condescending superiority, yet with a realization of the awful doom that Aline suggests may be their fate should they cross the magician. Alexis is not an easy part, nor a pleasant one. The many laughs in the part, it will be found, will look after themselves.

RALPH RACKSTRAW (*H.M.S. Pinafore*) pronounces his name "Rafe," not "Ralf." Despite the fact that the second does not rhyme with "waif," it is surprising how it persists in some productions. This is essentially a singing part, for there is little that presents any difficulty on the acting side beyond the high-sounding, poly-



Photo by J. W. Debenham

RICHARD DAUNTLESS

A tenor who must sing, act, and dance a hornpipe

syllabic speech with which Ralph proposes to Josephine. This gains its full effect from absolute sincerity, and must be rendered convincingly and surely. It should be learnt, practised, and rehearsed carefully, so that there is no risk of the slightest stumbling or hesitation over the words of this absurdly diverting utterance. Another point to which, both as actor and singer, Ralph

must pay heed is that, although consumed with an apparently hopeless and unrequited love, he is a sailor, and must be manly withal. Sentiment he may show, but never sentimentality.

FREDERIC (*The Pirates of Penzance*) presents us to the tenor lead who is also something of a comedian. Although Frederic must be a convincing lover, a keen sense of humour is a more desirable attribute than the ability for romance. Up to the revelation, in the second act, that he must turn against Mabel's father, the part should be taken in a light, whimsical, almost impish, manner. When the fact that he is really "a little boy of five" is disclosed, his amusement is unbounded. In the ensuing "Paradox" trio Frederic is far more the comedian than the tenor of operatic tradition. One must candidly admit that it is difficult to find a tenor who can combine this attitude with absolute sincerity and first class vocalism, but it is well worth while to take considerable pains with the most "sticky" amateur to inculcate this light and joyous touch into his rendering.

THE DUKE OF DUNSTABLE (*Patience*) is not, it will be remembered, the "lead" in this opera. Grosvenor (the baritone) ousts the tenor from that position. Here is another of the semi-comic tenor rôles. The Duke possesses neither the romantic bearing of Alexis or Ralph, nor the good natured high spirits of Frederic. He should be shown as a pleasant, rather empty-headed fop. His bored and blasé manner carries with it a certain charm and undoubted good breeding. The amusing side of the character is like that of the comedy leads, for it does not come from any conscious comedy playing. The Duke's outlook on life is not humorous, although he is quite a happy-go-lucky fellow, but he naturally cannot help being a source of amusement to others. It is a part to be played without any apparent effort. He has a drawling voice, but the actor must be careful not to turn the part into a typical musical comedy dude, with an irritating laugh and exaggerated Oxford accent.

EARL TOLLOLLER (*Iolanthe*) is not unlike the Duke in *Patience*, and should be played on much the same lines, except that Tolloller shows the possession of a greater amount of brain. In direct contrast to the clear decisiveness of his *vis-à-vis*, the Earl of Mountarat, Tolloller should be

played with a bored drawl and a smooth manner, though stopping short of being lackadaisical. He is an easy-going man about town, yet superbly proud of the nobility and tradition of the House of Lords. The most difficult scene is that in the second act with Phyllis and Mountarat. Here the two men, in their declarations of undying regard for each other, and the unwillingness they express to do anything that would cause pain to the other (i.e. to be killed by him) must be taken in dead seriousness. The more in earnest the two men appear in this scene, the more comic will be the effect.

HILARION (*Princess Ida*), as befits the hero of a medieval romance, is a graceful and charming figure, sufficiently restrained to set off his more flamboyant companions. At the same time, he must suggest that he is the leader of the adventure that leads to so much trouble and fun. To Hilarion this is a serious means to an end; to Cyril and Florian it develops into a glorious "rag." Hilarion enters into this spirit, but never loses sight of the object of his coming to Castle Adamant. To Hilarion falls much of the opera's romance and poetry. For all this, the part is quite devoid of any femininity, save that necessary to make the masquerade in female attire convincing up to a point.

CYRIL (*Princess Ida*) takes second place to Hilarion to the extent that a courtier would naturally do before a prince. He is not, one should feel, a courtier by choice, although he carries this position with entire success. He feels, and shows, that he would be happier away from the restraint of the court. Cyril has certain traits in common with the Defendant in *Trial by Jury*, and falls into the same class of tenor lead as does Frederic—the tenor-comedian. The high spirits of the part are not boisterous or exuberant. In the "kissing song" Cyril should be shown as merrily tipsy rather than drunk. He shocks the Princess and her students, not through the fact of having drunk more than is good for him, but because his behaviour is something unknown in their experience. He is an impulsive youth rather than a bounder, and there is nothing in the part to suggest, as at least one writer has done, that Cyril is a cad.

NANKI-POO (*The Mikado*) must show signs of his court upbringing. Although he has fled from

the palace in a state of panic, by the time he appears in the opera he has become fond of his roving life. He is now worrying about nothing (or nobody), except Yum-Yum, and when he finds that he has lost her, his efforts to end his existence must be shown as though he were absolutely in earnest. This is another of those



Photo by J. W. Debenham

"THE SON OF THE MIKADO"

Nanki-Poo, after many trials and tribulations is re-united to Yum-Yum

scenes the comedy of which is enhanced by serious playing. But when, at last, he is married, and officially dead, a light flippancy comes to the surface. This flippancy has also been noticed at the beginning of his first scene with Yum-Yum. Nanki-Poo regards Ko-Ko, his rival, with some amusement; it is only Katisha whom he fears.

RICHARD DAUNTLESS (*Ruddigore*) emphatically belongs to the tenor-comedian class. In

addition he must be a capable dancer. Dick is, of course, the jolly Jack Tar of *Black Ey'd Susan* and similar plays; a care-free, happy-go-lucky individual, on excellent terms with himself (and his heart). Dick is a rollicking part, but care is needed to see that he does not become exuberant. The stage sailor of melodrama was never that. He was breezy, and had a knack of turning up at the right moment. But he was taken very seriously, and had no time or inclination for exuberance. Dick should be modelled on the same lines. He proposes to Rose on Robin's behalf, not because he thinks it would be fun, but out of genuine kindness and the desire to help his bashful foster-brother. Then there is no malice behind his disclosure of Robin's secret. He believes it to be his duty to tell Sir Despard the truth, and acts accordingly.

COLONEL FAIRFAX (*The Yeomen of the Guard*) has no quarrel with the world. In the shadow of the scaffold he bears himself with dignity, uncomplaining. To circumvent his rascally kinsman, he enters light-heartedly into matrimony. His escape accomplished, he forgets all about his marriage for the rest of the first act, and goes merrily into his assumed guise. But, later, he refers to his "conjugal fetters" and how to free himself from them. Yet when Elsie's identity is known to him, instead of disclosing himself at once, he woos her in the guise of Leonard, and has to convey the idea that he is doing so in fun, and that he means to reveal himself as a prodigious leg-puller when he sees that his joke has gone far enough. But his self-revelation is prevented by the sudden shot. His attitude towards Jack Point is that all's fair in love. After all, he must know that Jack cannot win Elsie, whose husband (Fairfax) lives, but instead of announcing this fact, so sure is he of himself, the Colonel must have his little joke of wooing and winning his own wife under the jester's eyes. At the end, beneath his triumph, Fairfax shows genuine pity for his defeated rival.

Thus it will be seen that many varied, and even contradictory, emotions fall to the player of this role. They range from debonair trifling, through the philosophy of the grave student, to ardent love-making. One meets in Fairfax the contradiction of one who has given deep thought to the

subject of life and death, yet who combines with this attitude the irresponsibility of a school-boy. The key-note to the more serious side of Fairfax is set by his first entrance. This should be played in a simple, unforced manner, with no high-falutin heroics. The actor should suggest the philosophic attitude of one who goes to meet death unafraid, who looks upon it as an experiment—"a great adventure." Summed up, Fairfax is a gallant man, somewhat selfish, but thoroughly engaging; a romantic figure, calling for a strong and sympathetic personality, and, above all, an easy, manly, singing voice.

MARCO PALMIERI (*The Gondoliers*) is an engaging fellow, and should be played on light, good humoured lines. The contrast between him and his brother, Giuseppe, is shown mainly in the vocal difference, but there should be a suggestion that Marco is the more serious of the two—as far as that word can be applied to these merry, care-free fellows, whose brief spell of authority causes them some embarrassment and not a little fun. Of course Marco must see that he preserves the balance of the quartet with Giuseppe, Gianetta, and Tessa.

Every tenor, I suppose, has sung Marco's famous "Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes." It must be remembered that it is a different proposition to sing this song on the stage, as a necessary development of the story, instead of as a straight ballad in the drawing room or concert hall. Unless the action is suited to the words, this number will lose most of its effect on the stage. In these circumstances it is not a detached number, and must fit gently and unforced into its proper setting. Marco is giving his "recipe for perfect happiness" to the attentive Giuseppe alone. In effect, the song is not being sung to the audience at all. This picture may be relaxed for the second verse to some slight extent—Marco can move to the centre of the stage, and sing part to the audience, part to Giuseppe. But the song is invariably encored, and as Giuseppe has received his advice, it is quite permissible for the encored verse to be sung straight out to the audience. Indeed, for this occasion, it is a graceful action to withdraw Giuseppe, quietly, into the wings, giving the soloist the whole stage.

# THE GOVERNANCE OF THE DANCE IN ENGLAND

By PHILIP J. S. RICHARDSON

*Editor, "The Dancing Times"*

IT has occurred to me that, in this final treatment of stage dancing, a useful purpose will be served if I give an account of the various bodies which, to some extent, control the teaching of dancing in England.

It should at the outset be made clear that it is possible to succeed in the dancing world without belonging to any one of the various associations or societies or passing examinations. Not one of them can, as yet, be said to occupy a position equal in standing to that of the Royal College or the Royal Academy of Music, but it should be remembered that they are all comparatively youthful.

In the few years during which they have been in existence several of these associations have done invaluable work, and can be of great assistance to the young dancer.

Until about fifteen years ago we had a mere handful of English teachers who could be relied upon to teach the correct technique. English dancers who wished to progress had therefore to go to a foreign teacher, who might be in this country one month and out of it the next to wherever his engagements chanced to take him. This lack of sound English teachers was due to the absence in this country of any Royal or State-aided school that could be turned to as a criterion of what was right and what was wrong. As long as Russia, Italy, France, and Denmark had their famous endowed schools in Petrograd, Milan, Paris, and Copenhagen, there was no excuse for bad teaching in those countries, and, conversely, until we established some such school in this country there was no guarantee that our teachers were correct.

Feeling that no assistance could be hoped for from the Government, a few far-seeing teachers banded themselves together in an endeavour to supply the omission, and as a result there are now several bodies that place the correct technique of dancing within the reach of all.

I mention first the Association of Operatic Dancing of Great Britain, which has the honour of being under the Patronage of Her Majesty



*Photo by Lenare*

MADAME ADELINE GENÉE

President of the Association of Operatic Dancing of Great Britain on her last appearance at the Coliseum in 1933

the Queen. This body makes it its duty to preserve and to teach the traditional "Operatic" or "Ballet" technique, which is the basis of nearly all dancing. It is controlled by a Council of which that famous dancer Madame Adeline Genée is



the President, and Madame Thamar Karsavina and Miss Phyllis Bedells members.

Membership of the Association is gained by passing its Elementary Examination. Once that has been negotiated the member is expected to take subsequent examinations, known as the

The offices of the Association are at 154 Holland Park Avenue, London, W.11.

Working on similar lines to those of the Association the Cecchetti Society was founded about two years later for the purpose of perpetuating the method of teaching ballet dancing



Photo by J. W. Debenham

#### A SCENE FROM "JOB"

The famous ballet set to music by Vaughan-Williams with *décor* after the drawings by William Blake, produced by the Vic-Wells Company

"Intermediate," the "Advanced," and the "Solo Seal," which are of increasing degrees of difficulty. There is also a special Examination for Teachers. The Association has about two thousand members, and an engagement as an assistant in a dancing school is frequently contingent upon the candidate having passed one or more of the Association's Examinations.

The activities of the Association include numerous Free Classes or Lectures for the benefit of its members, and twice a year are held specially graded Examinations for Children, for which there are nearly six thousand candidates annually.

used by that famous teacher, Enrico Cecchetti, who was for many years associated either with the Imperial School in Petrograd or the Diaghileff Ballet. The method adopted is perhaps slightly different from that in use by the Association, and it is beyond my province to discuss here which is the better. It may be stated, however, that many dancers and teachers have found it useful to study both systems. The Cecchetti Society has been incorporated in the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, and is known as the "Classical Ballet" Branch of that Society.

The Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing,



with headquarters at 113-117 Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.2, is the largest Association of dance teachers in the world. It has about three thousand members, but a high percentage of these belong to its ball room branch only. Of particular interest to readers of *THEATRE AND STAGE* are

a number of years ago, and has its headquarters at Philbeach Hall, Philbeach Gardens, London, S.W.5. This Association is more or less indispensable to anyone who wishes to take up the teaching of this style of dancing, which now finds so much favour in the High Schools of the



A SCENE FROM "COPPELIA"

*Photo by J. W. Debenham*

A production of the Vic-Well's Company. Madame Lydia Lopokova as "Swanilda" is in the centre

its Classical Ballet Branch and its Stage Branch. In the latter full attention is devoted to all those phases of stage dancing that do not actually come under the heading of "Classical Ballet"—such as "tap," "acrobatic," and "musical comedy" work. The Society also has branches devoted to "Operatic" and "Greek" dancing. The syllabus for these two branches is based on those of the Association of Operatic Dancing of Great Britain and the Greek Association respectively.

The Greek Association, or to give it its full title, the Association of Teachers of the Revived Greek Dance, was founded by Miss Ruby Ginner

country. For the theatrical dancer its importance is not so great.

In addition to the Associations and Societies that I have named there are others that do good work in their own particular spheres, but in the majority of cases most of their activities are devoted to ballroom work. Nine times out of ten merit alone will enable a girl to make her way as a dancer, but she will find membership of an appropriate organization of great help—especially if she wishes to become a teacher.

It is undoubtedly owing to the hard work that has been accomplished by these bodies during the

past ten years or so that English dancing has gained in reputation, and it is hoped that the time is not far distant when official recognition, a Royal Charter, will be awarded. The bestowal of this would confer on the Examinations and Certificates an importance that would be far greater than that which they now possess.

the course of the year, hold, generally during the summer months, a "Week" of Special Lectures and Classes, at which instruction is given to their members by some of the most famous teachers in the world.

These Associations are not "Employment Agencies," but, nevertheless, membership fre-



MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF OPERATIC DANCING OF GREAT BRITAIN  
A production of "The Debutante" at the Coliseum

*Photo by Lenore*

The value of the work that these Associations have done is already recognized abroad, and on several occasions the Operatic Association and the Classical Ballet Branch of the Imperial Society have sent their Examiners to South Africa, and arrangements are being made for Australia to be included in their activities.

Practically all the Societies and Associations, in addition to the many Free Classes given during

quently brings the young dancer into contact with those who have it in their power to give engagements or at any rate to provide auditions. Often an entertainment is staged at which budding talent can be seen. Now and then is stage managed or organized a bigger event, such as the visit to the Royal Theatre, Copenhagen, by an English Ballet Company, which was arranged by the Operatic Association.

## SOME SIMPLE SETTINGS

By CONSUELO M. DE REYES

*Producer, Little Theatre, Citizen House, Bath, and Everyman Theatre, Hampstead; Lecturer in Drama, University College, Exeter*

THE best method of conducting rehearsals towards the final phase of a play is to give the act or scene without any pauses or breaks, while the director makes notes on any parts that may need change or correction, so that these parts only will then need to be repeated. Alternatively, the director, like the conductor of an orchestra, may get whatever changes he requires to be made without interrupting the play by directing the players in a quiet voice and telling them to quicken pace or to hold the position. Sometimes a suggestion to quicken speed is taken to mean more rapid delivery, which, of course, merely ends in lack of distinctness. Speed should always be effected by a more rapid picking up of cues, even before the preceding speaker has quite finished. Curtain calls should always be rehearsed. Frequently an excellent effect may be secured by the use of "character" curtain calls, in which each player assumes the definitely characteristic position that has been assigned to him or her in the play, and thus recalls the main theme.

The wise director will always see that during final rehearsals a long run-through of the play without interruption is afforded. Nothing is more aggravating to the players than to be constantly interrupted for work on details that have not been learned at previous rehearsals. It is essential to work for a continuous and confident performance, and although the expert director will see many details, in every rehearsal, which might be improved, he will neglect these at the end for the sake of "pulling the play together." The effect of a play on an audience is enormously the effect of the whole production.

All sounds of footsteps on the stage should be eliminated by the use of proper shoes. Noises that may not seem to be noticeable during rehearsals when the director constantly interrupts can be very loud in the silence of an attentive audience. It is helpful to persuade scene-shifters to wear carpet shoes, as these reduce the number of disillusioning creakings.

The dress rehearsal should be a rehearsal for scene-shifters, electricians, and all other members of the producing force, as well as for the players, though the expert director will have rehearsed each of these teams separately, so that at the final rehearsal all that will be necessary will be to unify their various branches of work. Each member of the scene-shifting staff must know exactly at what moment he must proceed to the stage, what properties he must take off and which he must put on. It is essential that the right order in this procedure should be observed, and that all used properties should be removed before any new properties are put on. I have known a multiplicity of willing helpers ruin a production by rushing on the stage with the properties of the next scene before the used props were removed, with the result that everything required in the following scene had already been taken away and mislaid before the players arrived on the scene.

Whenever stage flats have to be used the order in which they should be arranged should be clearly written on their backs, or any special directions should be painted on them. Charcoal marks on the floorcloth may be made to show details of exact position. A little foresight expended in these ways will save time and trouble on the day of production. In our own theatre we frequently have scene-shifting drills, i.e. rehearsals at which no players are present, but at which every scene is put up and removed time after time until precision and speed have been secured. Great interest is usually taken by the scene-shifters in securing record time both for building up and for striking a scene. The gain at the final performance in securing efficient smoothness is appreciable. Some directors like to have an invited audience at their final dress rehearsal. The presence of such an audience helps the players to establish the "feeling" of playing before people.

The first performance of any play, despite a persistent belief to the contrary, is frequently the

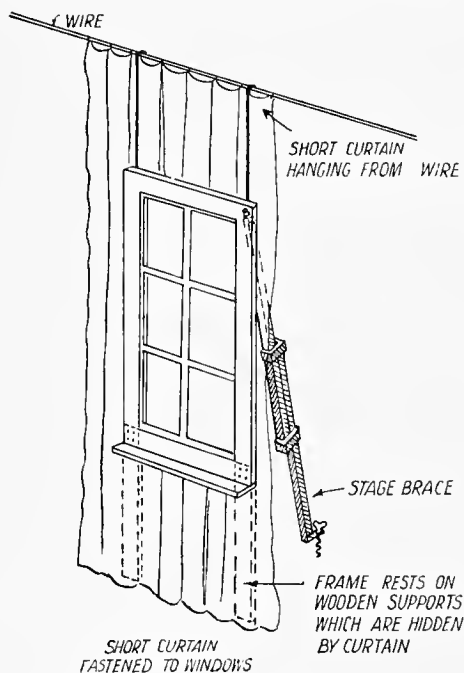
most successful, since members are "keyed up" to doing their best. When this attention is somewhat relaxed at the second or subsequent performance avoidable mistakes are apt to occur. In order to keep up the interest and standard of a production during a long run I have found it an excellent plan to issue a sheet of daily commen-

is impossible for them, but it must be remembered that audiences grow tired of seeing the same set of draperies for play after play. Painted scenery that can be remade and repainted for different performances time after time is much more satisfactory, and if it is simply planned and executed, it is inexpensive.

Undoubtedly the best equipped amateur theatre will possess at least two sets of curtains and certain properties that can be used or not, as desired, in conjunction with the curtains. Curtains and draperies may be made of velours, hessian or scrim, casement or any material that is available in suitable widths. Suitability of width is essential to facilitate ease in hanging and to avoid too many seams, which tend to cockle the curtains. With two sets of draperies, one a good light grey and the other a black, almost any play can be set, and with proper lighting excellent effects can be secured. Apart from the method of surrounding the stage by wires on to which curtains may be hung, it is frequently desirable to build a frame in the desired shape and to fasten the curtains to it. Such a frame may, moreover, be taken down in sections and stored or used for touring.

Professionally made curtains are usually gathered on to a piece of webbing, two or three inches wide, in which there are grommets through which the curtain may be tied to wires or frames. They are weighted at the bottom by a chain run through the hem. A narrow bag of shot or of sand may be used for the same purposes. Frequently the producer will find it of the greatest help not to have his material made into curtains. It can be cut into strips that are long enough to reach from the supporting wire or frame to the floor. These strips may be fastened to webbing so that they may be tied to a support, or they may be cut long enough so that they can be folded over the support at the top and pinned with long pins or wire nails. They should overlap each other about six inches. Short strips reaching to within six or seven feet of the floor will make openings for doors. Entrances may be made between the strips at any point. Curtains of this type are far more flexible than the ordinary cyclorama that encloses the stage.

Whatever system is employed, it is helpful to alternate the effects, for the sake of variety and also for the purpose of gaining further reality by



#### METHOD OF HANGING A WINDOW FRAME IN DRAPERIES

on each performance and to place it in the wings of the stage and in the Green Room. These commentaries suggest any improvements that occur to the producer while watching a performance and any remarks that are made by members of the audience. This practice contributes to the maintenance of continuous interest. The modern producer endeavours to give his play just that scenery or surround that is best for the creation of atmosphere. In this connexion scenery may be roughly divided into two classes: (1) draperies of unpainted materials, which are left in their natural colours or dyed in solid colours; and (2) painted scenery of more or less traditional type. Many amateur organizations, especially in schools, use draperies almost exclusively under the impression that painted scenery

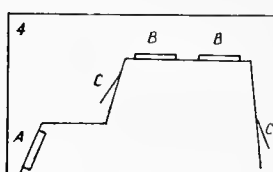
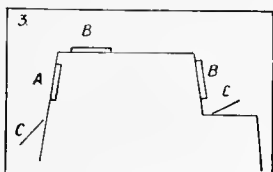
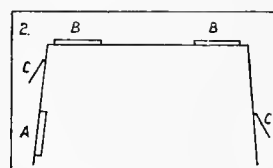
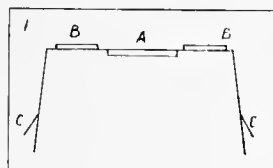
the use of door frames and practical doors, windows, pictures, hangings, and fireplaces, which may all be made to function with curtains. If you are fortunate enough to be in touch with an Art Master or Handicraft Teacher, your course will be easy, but the majority of male players with a flair for carpentry will soon delight in enriching their Little

Theatre with useful properties. Great care should be taken to paint such scenery a colour that will tone with that of the curtains, otherwise there will be too harsh a contrast between the edge of the property and the curtain. Few things have been more altered by the new art movement in the theatre than painted scenery. Gone are the ornate rooms with painted decorations and the persistent shadows that stood out regardless of the direction from which the light was thrown. There are no longer painted back drops in false and exaggerated perspective, so that the

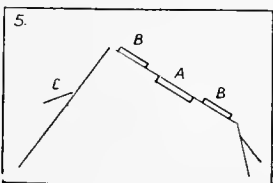
shadow of the hero on the stage falls on the mountains miles away in the distance. The modern stage designer attempts to secure effects by mass, and by line and colour, and not merely by imitating Nature. He has learned that he is most successful if he attempts to suggest Nature rather than to copy her. Realism on the stage is as impossible as it is in other forms of Art. The intelligent selection of details is the basis of all Art.

Simplification is the keynote of the modern designer. He will not attempt to reproduce a Moorish palace by an elaborately painted interior: he will use a single arched door. He will suggest a tiny room in the heart of a medieval castle by a single round pillar that is capable of bearing the weight of the building above. He will try to find

objects, such as a doorway, window, and fireplace, which may give the desired suggestion by characteristic treatment. The producer will find the use of "broken colour" of the greatest value. If he wants to suggest a stone wall he will not paint individual stones and shadows and mortar, as was done by the old-fashioned method. He will try



A = FIRE-PLACE  
B B = WINDOWS  
C.C. = DOORS



POSSIBLE GROUND PLANS FOR A LIVING ROOM  
CONTAINING TWO DOORS, TWO WINDOWS AND  
A FIREPLACE

to give the "tone" of a stone wall by applying spots of grey and brown and grey-green. For an interior, instead of applying a flat surface, he will break up the colour into its several elements, and apply them one over the other. Thus, if he wishes to produce a green surface, he will cover his surface with spots of yellow and blue and green, and thus secure an interesting texture, instead of mixing all his paints and producing a flat surface. In this manner, the eye mixes the applied colour in spots, although it actually sees it as a whole.

Painted scenery may be divided into three groups—

1. Suspended or hanging scenery, such as drops, borders, and cycloramas. Drops are wide-painted curtains, hanging from above the stage

and reaching to the floor. They usually form the background for scenes, especially exteriors, and represent distant skies and hills and forests. The excessive and elaborate detail that used to characterize these drops is being used less and less. The modern designer usually employs them effectively in bold design as a colour background.

A cyclorama is a curtain, or moulded sky, which encloses the entire stage. Roughly, it is a great semicircle running from one side of the proscenium arch to the other side. Drops and cycloramas in exterior sets are commonly painted blue to represent the sky.

2. Framed pieces that stand on the floor and support themselves, or they may be flat wooden frames covered with canvas. The walls of a room usually consist of a number of such pieces, each of which is called a "flat."

3. Plastic pieces, which are three dimensional, and which include pillars, posts, trees, door frames, window frames, stairways, and rostrums.

The most useful method when designing scenery and starting after the setting has been visualized is to lay out the ground plan for the set. It will be better for the artist to lay out several ground plans, and then to determine which will be the easiest to handle, afford the maximum scope to the players, and yet be inexpensive. Into which plan will the stage properties possessed by the group be most easily rebuilt and adapted? The size of the flat must be decided upon during this first stage of designing. The height is usually determined by that of the theatre itself. Flats should preferably be two or three feet higher than the proscenium opening. If the opening is nine feet, flats can well be twelve feet in height; if the opening is twelve feet, fifteen feet will be satisfactory. This height need seldom be exceeded. The most satisfactory height for the majority of stages is nine or ten feet, and much time and money is saved if the flats are not made too tall.

If necessary, the proscenium opening may be cut down by a curtain, known as a "heaven," at the top.

The width of a flat should not exceed six feet, as any scenery wider than six feet is difficult to handle. Most professional flats are five feet nine inches in width. This is a standard size, which is

usual for railway transport. After the scenery has been visualized and the drawings or models prepared, the next step is to make it. Either unbleached muslin sheeting, which may be secured in six-foot widths, or theatrical canvas, is the usual material. As theatrical canvas is usually prepared and is very little more expensive than sheeting, it is generally the better.

If drops or wide curtains are required, it will be necessary to sew widths together. Double seams will be the most useful, as they make a flat surface on both sides of the cloth and are stronger. A batten or strip of wood should be placed at both the top and bottom edges of all drops. The drop will hang from the top batten; the bottom batten acts as a weight and holds the curtain flat. When not in use, drops are rolled on the battens.

If a careful model of a stage is made, it will be possible to dispense with the making of many mechanical drawings. The model should be sufficiently accurate to enable carpenters and painters to reproduce it. A heavy piece of cardboard of good quality to prevent warping and twisting should be used for the base of the model, which represents the floor of the stage. Every detail of the model should be made to exact scale; one-quarter inch to the foot is a useful scale. A larger scale may be used, if desired, but it is not wise to have models that are large and unwieldy. The best and easiest material to use for the proscenium and the scenery itself is a heavy drawing paper, such as a two-ply Bristol board with a finished surface on which to paint. The main part of the scenery may usually be cut out in one piece. On all the edges of the proscenium, and on the scenery itself, flaps about one-quarter of an inch in width should be left. These must be folded back in order to keep the paper from warping and to give the model solidity. The flaps at the bottom allow the scenery to be pasted to the floor board.

A society invariably produces its own artists, and nothing is likely to give more abiding interest to both players and audience than a collection of such stage models displayed in the foyer or auditorium. These will revive memories of productions and act as a centre of interest and stimulation for other groups that may thus be led to desire to produce the same play.

# EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN IN THEATRES

By DUDLEY S. PAGE

*Author of "Law of the Amateur Stage"*

IT frequently happens that amateur societies, both operatic and dramatic, find it necessary to employ children in their productions; indeed throughout the year productions entirely by children, sometimes of quite tender years, are given. In all such cases, the law has defined certain requirements for the protection of those who are too young to protect themselves, but there are, I presume, few people outside legal circles who have much knowledge of what those requirements consist.

We are not so much concerned with the requirements that are applicable to cases on the professional stage, where children are exploited for personal gain, but it may be stated briefly that those requirements comprise an application to the local education authority, which may grant a licence if the authority is satisfied that the child is fit to take part in the entertainment or series of entertainments, and that proper provision has been made to secure his health and kind treatment. Even so, such licence would be subject to the rules prescribed by the Board of Education. These include the production of birth certificates, photographs, medical certificates, reports on educational attainments, hours of employment, provisions for school attendance and recreation, and appointment of responsible guardians.

This is truly a formidable list, but there are, I believe, many instances among amateur entertainments in which this method of procedure is adopted, where a knowledge of the simple alternatives provided by Act of Parliament would attain the same object and save a good deal of time and trouble.

I will therefore deal only with those requirements that are applicable to cases in which the entertainment is organized for charity, as distinct from those that are organized on a professional basis, although both are governed by the same Act, namely, The Children and Young Persons

Act, 1933, which incorporates and amends similar provisions hitherto provided in The Children and Young Persons Act, 1932, and the Education Act, 1921.

By Section 22 of The Children and Young Persons Act, 1933, it is provided as follows—

(1) Subject to the provisions of this Section a child shall not, except under and in accordance with the provisions of a licence granted and in force thereunder, take part in any entertainment in connection with which any charge, whether for admission or not, is made to any of the audience; and every person who causes or procures a child, or being his parent or guardian, allows him to take part in any entertainment in contravention of this Section, shall, on summary conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding five pounds, or, in the case of a second or subsequent offence, not exceeding twenty pounds.

(2) Subject as hereinafter provided and without prejudice to the provisions of this part of this Act and any by-laws made thereunder with respect to employment, a licence under this Section shall not be necessary for a child to take part in an entertainment if—

(a) he has not during the preceding six months taken part on more than six occasions in entertainments in connection with which any such charge as aforesaid was made; and

(b) the net proceeds of the entertainment are devoted to purposes other than the private profit of the promoters:

Provided that this subsection shall not apply in the case of an entertainment given in premises which are licensed for the sale of any intoxicating liquor unless either

(i) those premises are also licensed for the public performance of stage plays or for public music, singing or dancing; or

(ii) special authority for the child to take part in the entertainment has been granted in

writing under the hands of two Justices of the Peace.

It will be noted that the Act does not apply in the case of an occasional entertainment not promoted for private profit, so that an entertainment promoted for charity is exempt from the provisions of the Act, provided the entertainment takes place in premises other than those licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquor.

But in the case of all such entertainments held on premises that are licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquor, unless they are also licensed for the performance of stage plays or for public music, singing or dancing, the requirements of the Act must be observed.

There is, however, a simple method of getting over the difficulty. This is set out in the Act, and adoption of it entails obtaining the consent of two Justices of the Peace as referred to in subsection (2) (i) of the Act.

It may be presumed that in nearly every case one or more of the promoters will be acquainted with two Magistrates from whom a certificate can be obtained. Since there is no statutory form for such certificate, the following formula is suggested—

"We, the undersigned, two of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the (*here state the County Borough or Magisterial Division in which the entertainment takes place*), being informed that an entertainment is to be held by (*here state name of Society or persons promoting the entertainment*) in the (*here state place*) on (*here state date or dates*) in which children being girls under the age of 16 or boys under the age of 14 are taking part, and being satisfied that such entertainment is promoted in aid of charity and that proper provisions are being made for the comfort and safety of the children, hereby certify that such entertainment shall be exempt from the provisions of Section 22 of The Children and Young Persons Act, 1933.

Have such a document as this typed on foolscap and obtain the signatures of two Magistrates at the foot thereof. But since Magistrates will probably want to be satisfied that they have the power to sign, and since they may not always be familiar with the Act, it will be desirable to inform them of the requirements beforehand and

to refer them to the section of the Act authorizing this procedure. Such certificate, when obtained, should be available during the performance for production if required to any police officer.

Promoters of entertainments will be well advised when in any doubt whatever to obtain such a certificate. They will be absolutely safe whatever the circumstances may be.

It should be noted that omission to comply with the requirements of the Act renders any offending person liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £5, and in certain cases in which life or limb is endangered, such penalties could amount to as much as £50.

Reference must be made to the responsibility resting on the promoters of entertainments and proprietors of licensed premises for the safety of children *attending* public performances, as distinct from those taking part. Section 12 (i) of the Act is as follows—

"Where there is provided in any building an entertainment for children, or an entertainment at which the majority of persons attending are children, then, if the number of children attending the entertainment exceeds one hundred, it shall be the duty of the person providing the entertainment to station and keep stationed wherever necessary a sufficient number of adult attendants, properly instructed as to their duties, to prevent more children or other persons being admitted to the building, or to any part thereof, than the building or part can properly accommodate, and to control the movement of the children and other persons admitted while entering and leaving the building or any part thereof and to take all other reasonable precautions for the safety of the children."

The responsibility falls not only on the promoters, but also on the proprietor of the premises. The penalties for breach of this necessary provision for the safety of children are heavy, and render an offending person liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £50 for a first offence and £100 for a subsequent offence. An offence might also involve a revocation of the licence applicable to such premises. It behoves all those responsible in such cases to comply with the requirements of the Act.



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